

IN THESE TIMES



OUR NEXT
PRESIDENT

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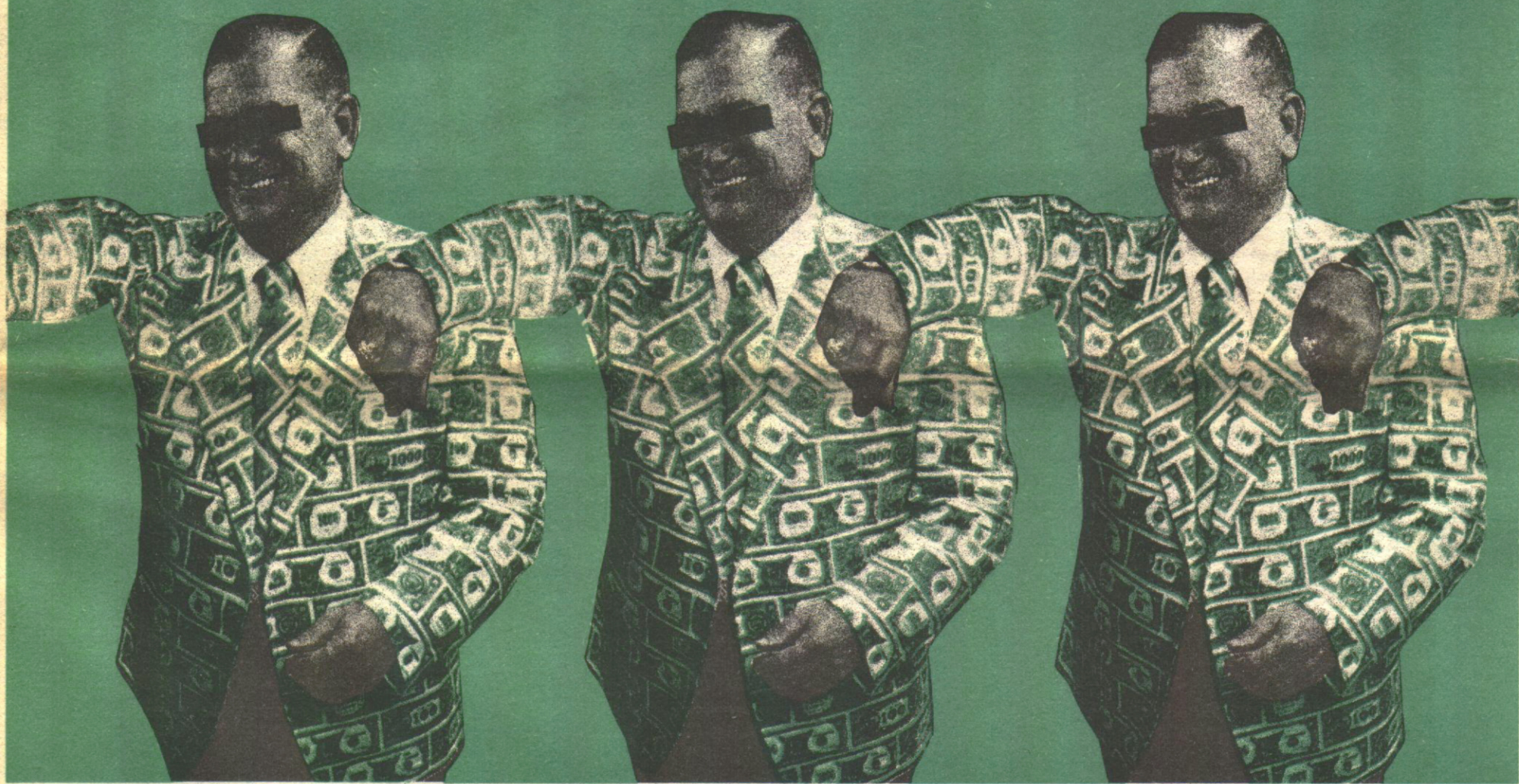
VOL. 4, NO. 13

FEBRUARY 20-26, 1980

75 CENTS

ABSCAM

*An offer they
couldn't refuse.*



The
**BLUES
LIVES!**

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THE INSIDE STORY



Steve Kagan

Ronald Reagan can't solve the Goldwater problem

By John Judis

Ronald Reagan, who seemed unbeatable six months ago, now faces early elimination from the Republican presidential race. If he loses in New Hampshire Feb. 26 and, as expected, in Massachusetts March 4, he will have to win at least half of the Southern primaries scheduled the next week in Florida, South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia. And even if he wins these, he will have to demonstrate in Illinois March 18 that he can win support outside the Sunbelt.

Reagan's troubles emanate partly from his age, 69. A recent CBS/*New York Times* poll found 15 percent of Republican voters concerned about whether Reagan was too old to be president. (With this kind of subject, it is likely the real percentage is much higher.) The existence of an opponent, George Bush, who possesses the image and organization to pose a real alternative, has also been a factor.

But the confusion that pervades Reagan's political position and campaign cannot be discounted. Reagan is caught between the activist Republican right wing, who have long supported his candidacy, and the more moderate Republican office-holder and voter, who remain suspicious of Reagan's "creative federalism" and fearful of his saber-rattling.

From New Deal to Goldwater.

When Ronald Reagan came to California in 1937, he was a fervent supporter of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Later, he helped found and was the president of the Screen Actors Guild. As late as 1950, he was sufficiently known as a leftist that Democratic Senate candidate Helen Gahagan Douglas, trying to ward off her red-baiting Republican opponent, Richard Nixon, decided not to list Reagan as one of her endorsers.

But the anti-Communist battles of the late '40s and early '50s and his job as General Electric's travelling representative fundamentally changed Reagan's outlook. He backed Eisenhower in 1952.

In 1964, he became California co-chair of the Barry Goldwater campaign, and his widely-seen televised pitch for Goldwater made him the darling of the Republican conservative movement, which in 1964 had successfully wrested the nomination for Goldwater against the "liberal Eastern establishment," led by Nelson Rockefeller. A Reagan for President committee was formed immediately after the 1964 election.

As governor of California, Reagan cemented his conservative ties. In practice, Reagan was no more able to dismantle the California educational or welfare system in his eight years as governor than *laissez-faire* conservatives Alan Greenspan and William Simon were able to transform the American economy during

their years as Gerald Ford's key economic advisers. But Reagan was able to build a constituency around his attacks against welfare cheaters and student radicals and his proposals that the U.S. "invade [North Vietnam], pave it over and be home for lunch."

In 1968, he was touted as the conservative alternative to Rockefeller and Richard Nixon; in 1972, he was poised once more to challenge the "moderate" Nixon; and in 1976, Reagan nearly defeated Gerald Ford, coming only 59 delegates short.

Reagan's near-win prompted different conclusions from his close advisers. Some of them, like campaign manager John Sears, noted that Reagan's promise that he would return \$90 billion to the states by dismantling federal welfare programs had allowed Ford to paint him into an anti-Social Security right-wing corner. Ford's victories in New Hampshire, Florida, and Illinois were largely the result of this perception of Reagan. Sears also noted in Ford's victory and near-win over Carter the strength of the moderate rather than conservative voter: the voter that identifies him or herself as a "fiscal conservative," but is unwilling to embrace the quasi-religious zealotry of the "New Right" on such issues as abortion and gun control or the militant excesses of the retired generals and admirals.

On the other hand, Reagan's supporters in the American Conservative Union and around the weekly *Human Events*, as well as longtime campaign aides like Lyn Nofziger, drew the opposite conclusion from his near-win over Gerald Ford. Reagan's comeback had occurred in the North Carolina primary after he had "taken off the gloves" and gone after Ford on the Panama Canal and detente. They attributed his final defeat partly to Sears' plan to win moderate support by designating Senator Richard Schweiker as Reagan's running mate.

But Sears, buttressed by Gerald Ford's withdrawal from the primaries and Reagan's huge lead over potential opponents, convinced Reagan to go after the moderate Republican and independent voter—to wage a campaign for the nomination that would not compromise his expected general election campaign. Reagan pollster Richard Wirthlin, a Sears ally, later explained this point of view. "We're battling for the 30 to 35 percent of the electorate that's still in an information-seeking mode about Ronald Reagan," he said. "These are cross-pressured people. They like his position on taxes, but worry that he's 'too brittle' or 'too simplistic'."

Bid for moderate support.

For two years prior to the 1980 election, Reagan tried at least to neutralize Republican moderates. He refused to permit his Nofziger-run Citizens for the Republic to fund right-wing primary challenges to Senators Edward Brooke and Clifford Case and Representative John Anderson. In October 1978, he even journeyed to Illinois to campaign for former foe Senator Charles Percy, who was facing a tough challenge from a New Right-funded Democrat. In January 1979, Reagan made a conspicuous pilgrimage to Washington to court old Rockefellerites like Senators Jacob Javits, Robert Packwood, and Charles Mathias.

In September, Nofziger resigned, soon to be followed by other old Reagan aides. A triumphant Sears kept his candidate out of the public eye. Reagan's few statements affirmed his new moderation. He said he would support a SALT agreement, only not SALT II—a clear departure from his past advocacy of American nuclear supremacy. He made Representative Jack Kemp, who prides himself on his ability to reach workers with his tax cut message, the head of his Policy Committee.

The Sears strategy was epitomized by Reagan's Nov.

13 announcement of candidacy. It took place in New York, a city Reagan had previously condemned to death. And with passing reference to Kemp's tax-cutting plans, it emphasized a Jerry Brown-like scheme for a "North American accord" and statehood for Puerto Rico. In the words of right-wing columnist John Lofton Jr., the speech did not mention "the sell-out of Taiwan, the Panama Canal giveaway, Rhodesia, Carter's acceptance of combat troops in Cuba, Nicaragua, abortion, the ERA, gun-control, busing, welfare, or the need to balance the federal budget."

In interviews with Lofton's *Battle Line* and with *Human Events*, Reagan tried to assure his conservative supporters that he had not abandoned the faith, but he created a wave of disillusionment with his candidacy. In Iowa, key past supporters like Conservative Coalition chairman Leroy Corey went over to Representative Phillip Crane's campaign. Other Iowans who had championed Reagan in 1976 turned to Representative Charles Grassley's senatorial bid against John Culver. In the final count, Crane was able to get 7 percent of the Caucus vote, which would have provided Reagan with the winning margin over Bush.

But Reagan was also not able to attract moderate support. Repeated visits by Sears to Iowa Governor Robert Ray, including an offer to be Reagan's campaign chairman, failed to sway the governor. Iowa moderates, like their counterparts elsewhere, went universally for Bush and Howard Baker.

Reagan was left between the devil and the deep blue sea—without sufficient conservative or newly acquired moderate support.

Defeating Bush.

In the wake of Reagan's Iowa defeat, his supporters have called for Sears' head. Columnist E. Stanton Evans, a longtime Reagan supporter, called for the candidate to abandon Sears' "strategy of blandness." Reagan's strength, Evans argued, was "his appeal to people on the issues. The Sears attempt to wrap the candidate in cotton batting cuts Reagan off from the very source of his popularity."

In his recent campaign speeches in New Hampshire and South Carolina, Reagan seems to have taken Evans' advice to heart. He has gone after Bush for his support of ERA and his opposition to a constitutional ban on abortions. And he has tried to out-militarize the other candidates by proposing a blockade on Cuba.

But while Reagan's hawkishness did save him in 1976, it may not do so in 1980. In 1976, Reagan was challenging a Republican incumbent committed to SALT, detente, and the return of the Panama Canal, whose widely-respected Secretary of State nevertheless inspired distrust among average citizens. There was also no threat of war on the horizon as there is in 1980. Reagan could therefore go after Ford's policies without appearing to be "another Goldwater."

As David Keene, Reagan's Southern Coordinator in 1976, and now Bush's campaign manager, explained, "The Panama Canal issue [in 1976] had nothing to do with the Canal. It said more about American people's feelings about where the country was, and what it was powerless to do, and their frustrations about the incomprehensibility of foreign policy over the last couple of decades." (Carter successfully addressed the same issue with his appeal for openness and human rights.)

In the present context, Reagan may just reawaken fears that he will start a Third World War.

In 1980, Reagan also faces in George Bush a challenger who can wear both the conservative and moderate hats, and who can claim Sunbelt as well as Eastern ties. This will make it more difficult for Reagan to stage a 1976-like comeback in the South and West. ■

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EDITORIAL

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ART

Tom Greensfelder, Director; Jessie Bunn, Associate Director; Dolores Wilber, Assistant Director; Jim Rinnert, Composition; Ann Tyler, Camera; Ken Firestone, Photographer.

BUREAUS

BOSTON: Sid Blumenthal, 8 Thayer Place, Brookline, MA 02146, (617) 738-9707.
DENVER: Timothy Lange, P.O. Box 6159, Denver, CO 80206, (303) 322-5315.
NEW YORK: George Carrano, Jon Fisher, 784 Columbus Ave., New York, NY 10025, (212) 865-7638.

BUSINESS

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Tough talk in steel industry

By David Moberg

PITTSBURGH

THE STEEL INDUSTRY, ITS PROFITS and production sliding sharply, has launched a two-front offensive to guarantee higher prices, profits and investment capital while keeping down the costs of labor. One front is the triennial negotiation of the basic steel industry labor contract covering the nine largest companies that opened here Feb. 5.

While urging the United Steelworkers to join their campaign for federal government aid in changing trade, tax, price control and environmental policies, the major steel companies struck a stern pose in their opening statement to union negotiators.

"It was bold. It was tough," one union staffer said of the corporate "sound-off." "They didn't leave you guessing." Another union negotiator described the company statement as "a gentle rap on the head with a two-by-four."

The discussions are being conducted under the terms of the Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA), which was first employed in 1974. The union gives up the right to strike on national issues in exchange for a guarantee of a 3 percent wage increase, a \$150 bonus and continuation of cost-of-living protection as well as some management and union rights clauses. Any national issues not resolved by April 14 will be arbitrated, but local unions can ask to strike over certain local issues. In 1977 iron ore miners were out for 138 days in a local dispute.

Although union president Lloyd McBride hopes to continue the ENA, the companies have been threatening to drop it if this year's package is too expensive or if the union doesn't restrict the threat of local strikes.

Inflation protection.

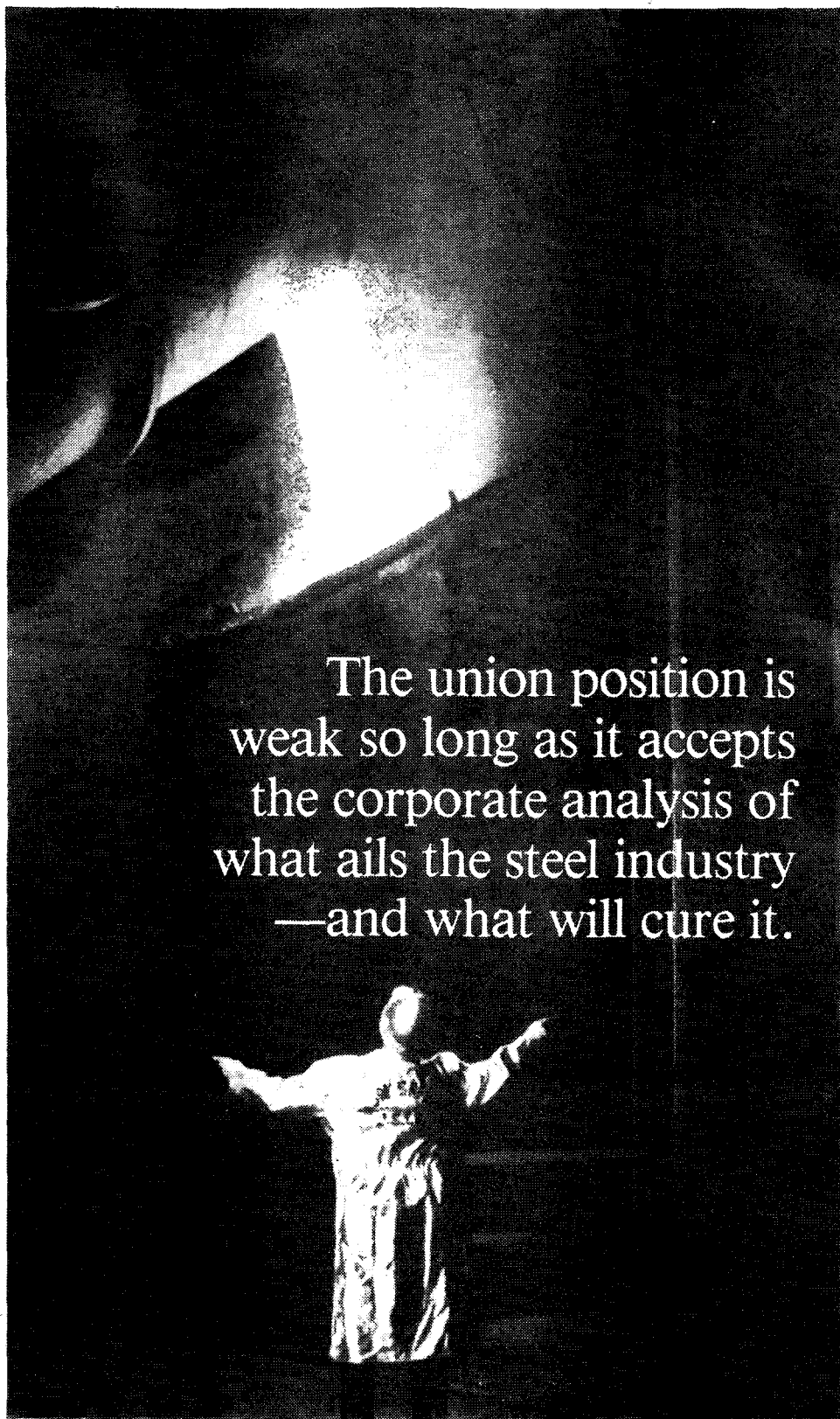
Simply continuing the ENA would produce a costly settlement since the rate of inflation will be high, and the industry can be expected to try to make ENA the limit, not the base. But the union wants to improve the cost-of-living formula, probably to something in the range that the Auto Workers won.

Also, like the UAW, the Steelworkers seek pension improvements. The proportion of retirees to active workers is half again greater among steelworkers than among autoworkers, however, raising the relative cost to the company of pension increases. Probably the union will take part of its 3 percent guaranteed increase (or possibly part of its cost-of-living increase) to pay for pension gains. The pension demand, McBride told the press, was "intended to take a portion of what would otherwise flow from these negotiations and apply it toward easing the problems of people who have already retired."

The coordinated steel companies, employing 286,000 of the 455,000 workers in the basic steel industry, argue that pension benefits already are adequate. Benefits vary greatly, but a worker with 30 years service could expect to retire now with a \$450 a month basic pension.

Improving pensions is also part of the union's package of proposals for dealing with one of its most pressing problems—plant closings, which have eliminated around 30,000 jobs in the past few years. Under the last contract, workers with more than 20 years seniority can in certain cases collect their pension, plus a settlement, if they are not offered suitable long-term employment by a company that shuts down a plant. The union wants to liberalize the terms of that protection and also move toward a lifetime earnings guarantee plan, as well as other improvements in wage protection.

The steel union's wage policy confer-



The union position is weak so long as it accepts the corporate analysis of what ails the steel industry—and what will cure it.

ence outlined a plan to deal with economic dislocation that included the following points: no closings of plants or major departments during a three-year contract; at least one year's advance notice of closing; provision by the company of all information needed to evaluate the shutdown or alternative proposals by workers, the union or economic development agencies; company cooperation in creating alternative jobs or retraining; preferential hiring of laid-off workers by other steel companies in the area (and "portable" pensions between companies).

Many of these strong proposals, backed by workers recently hit by shutdowns, may be lost in negotiations. In his remarks to the press before the "sound-off," McBride emphasized that the union should be alert for signs of corporate failure to invest and modernize and should discuss such shortcomings in advance with management. Although he complained about finding out "after the fact" by a "telephone call" when recent plants closed, he also said, "In all fairness, that's understandable. The decision to close a plant can have an adverse effect on the value of the stock...I can understand why there's a need not to give anyone every decision of that kind in advance..."

For his part, J. Bruce Johnston, the chief negotiator for the steel companies, said, "In any discussion of plant closings the steel industry should be a model and not a target....I think we have made our disclosures adequately to the employees in the past."

The union will push hard for certain

demands of the skilled crafts, but it may be forced by the companies to make concessions in exchange that the crafts will deeply resent. Subcontracting of maintenance work—in recent years equal to about 5 percent of all USW skilled employment—is a special target. Also, wage increases will probably be distributed to increase the pay differential between different classes of workers.

But the steel companies want to dissolve some of the jealously guarded lines of demarcation between the jobs different skilled workers perform—creating what some workers sarcastically call the "supercraftsman." Those all-around skilled workers would then be assigned directly to a department rather than work out of a central maintenance shop. Both moves would save the company much time and money, but undercut the trade identities and power.

Picking off the weak.

The industry will also press hard to separate from the basic steel contract a number of fabricating shops, warehouses and other subsidiaries where, they claim, wage and benefit rates have grown far higher than the non-union and even USW-organized plants in the same field. Roughly 12,000 workers could be affected by such a move. Although the union policy statement opposes such a break-off of these plants, McBride urged acceptance of a U.S. Steel demand for no wage increases in a similar case of three American Bridge facilities threatened with closing last November. Before negotiations started, McBride said the un-

ion "will listen intently" to the corporate case for similar exclusions.

Among other important demands by the union are the following:

- an end to compulsory overtime;
- consideration of workers as innocent until proven guilty in discipline cases;
- penalties assessed against the company for its violation of the contract;
- stronger safety and health protection, including identification of the chemical composition and hazards of all substances at each plant;
- greater union control over pension fund investment, including a requirement that the funds be used to the members' overall advantage and in particular be used for economic development and housing programs in areas where steelworkers live.

Dark clouds.

The climate for negotiations doesn't favor the union. First, there were the recent shutdowns of steel facilities and the American Bridge concessions. Then there was the release just before negotiations of an American Iron and Steel Institute study warning of further job losses if the steel companies are not given aid from the government and the union so they can amass and invest \$7 billion a year. These certainly put a chill in what would have been grim talks in any case. Finally, auto sales are down and steel orders are dropping.

The steel companies took advantage of this and reminded union negotiators that at \$11 an hour steelworkers were the top of the U.S. industrial worker hierarchy. Wage increases in the past decade outstripped productivity increases, they pointed out, although wages have lagged behind productivity over the past two decades taken together—and the poor showing in the '70s was a reflection of the sluggish economy and the earlier failures of the industry to modernize sufficiently. But the hard times, combined with the past gains, give the steel industry negotiators added determination to "limit labor costs."

The union is not in a strong position, especially since it accepts the bulk of the corporate analysis of the industry's problems and of its proposed solutions—clamp down on imports, get faster tax depreciation, stop government interference with steel price increases.

The union takes issue mainly with the demand for weakened environmental regulations, although even there McBride left a slight opening for compromise. One delicate matter hanging over the negotiations thus may be just what price the union will try to exact from the corporations for being an eager and cooperative lobbyist on behalf of the industry on its second front—federal government policy.

Critics within the union feel that the leadership is not taking a strong enough stand on behalf of job security and continued employment in the traditional steel areas. But the critics' strategies differ. Some want the equivalent of the deal west coast longshore leader Harry Bridges struck on the introduction of containerized cargoes—full technological freedom for management, full lifetime job security for all workers now employed. Others seek greater public and worker control—at the federal level and at the level of communities and the mills themselves—of management investment decisions.

The tone that union negotiators struck in their opening remarks was one of understanding and sympathy for the industry problems. The tone struck by the corporations the following day was hardly reciprocal. Cooperative relations on such terms are likely to be one-sided, and the workers in the older mills of the steel industry fear increasingly that theirs is the side that is losing. ■

THE DRAFT



The woman thing is a red herring, some say, but an all-male draft will be challenged in the courts.

If it's all male, is it illegal?

By Joanna Foley

NEW YORK

WOMEN'S ISSUES WERE scarcely visible in the presidential race until last week. Then President Carter revived draft registration. And like a theater producer who resurrects a creaking play, he added the fresh faces of young women to divert the audience.

Affected by the plan are 4.2 million 19- and 20-year-old females. Eighteen year olds will be included next year.

The uproar that greeted Carter's plan was fraught with contradictions. Strong supporters of the military like Phyllis Schafly were outraged while some dov-

ish feminists expressed cautious approval. "If there's to be a registration, we support the inclusion of women," said NOW.

Most Congressional leaders say the women's half of the registration plan stands almost no chance of passing. Why then, observers wondered, did candidate Carter catch the hot potato that Congress threw him last fall when it declined to tackle the question of women and the draft?

Some feminists suggested Carter was simply manipulating a women's issue for his own ends. "I think the woman thing is a red herring," said Betty Friedan. "The draft is an hysterical reaction—a diversion from the real issue of whether we're going to get involved in a conflict."

Criticism of the president's plan was heard even before he made his expected

announcement. "The increase in the military budget will hurt women as domestic spending programs are cut," said Bella Abzug at a Washington press conference. Abzug now heads Women USA, a new grassroots organization. Joining her were representatives from the National Women's Political Caucus, the Congress of Neighborhood Women, the National Commission on Household Employment and several other groups. (To encourage opposition, Women USA is operating a national telephone hotline—800-221-4945—that provides an anti-draft message from Congresswoman Pat Schroeder.)

Several women found it ironic that women could be registered for the draft while they still face discrimination in the military as volunteers. "If there were greater equality and less discrimination, the military would get enough response

not to need the draft," Abzug told **IN THESE TIMES**.

Women now number about 150,000 or 7.5 percent of the total armed forces. That percentage has risen sharply since 1972 when Congress removed the 2 percent ceiling on female enrollment.

The number of women grew simply because the barriers were removed. Data suggest that women still are not recruited equally. "The military spends \$3,700 for each male recruit compared to only \$150 for each female recruit," said Chicago NOW president Mary Jean Collins.

Another 100,000 women volunteers are expected to enter the armed forces by the mid-'80s, and they'll still face discrimination. "There's a ceiling on the percentage of women in each job category," said Carol Paar, director of the Women's Equity Action League Fund. "The percentage differs for each job, of course. But even for clerical categories, women aren't allowed to fill all the positions."

Whither ERA?

Ratification of the ERA is expected to remain the major women's political issue for the year. Several activists wonder how the current debate will affect public opinion in the unratified states.

"Logically, it should help ERA's chances," said Susan Meredith, senior attorney at Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund. "But it could also go the other way. If the right wing forces blame women's lib for drafting women, they can argue that 'We've got to stop it now before it goes any further'."

If the registration plan for women dies in Congress as expected, the other half of the administration proposal will likely wind up before the Supreme Court. A male-only registration plan, according to Abzug and other lawyers, is vulnerable to Constitutional challenge under the Fourteenth Amendment. "I think we'll see a rush to the courts by ACLU or a similar organization," predicted Susan Meredith.

The Connecticut attorney is optimistic about both the legal and political outcomes. "A court case would last until after the November election," she said. "Registration for men only would probably then be thrown out by the court. That would give us all a chance to consider more calmly whether registration is really needed for anyone." ■

MAINE CAUCUSES

A big turnout fails to support the president

By Russ Christensen
and Burt Hatlen

BANGOR, MAINE

MAINE IS HAVING ITS MILD-est winter in 98 years, and the warm sunshine on Feb. 10 may have had something to do with the large turnout at Maine's Democratic caucuses. But more important was the decision of the state Democratic organization to hold all the caucuses on the same day, rather than allowing each town or city to caucus at its own convenience, as in previous years. The same-day rule allowed television networks to turn the Maine caucuses into a media event, and the candidates responded by devoting an unusual degree of attention to the state. Maine's registered Democrats, in turn, came out in unprecedented numbers.

Jerry Brown spent almost two weeks in Maine, and he used every possible forum to attack Carter for bringing us to the brink of war in defense of an indefensible energy policy. Brown won a sizeable following among college students and among the counter-culture urban dropouts scattered through Maine's rural regions. Whatever else his campaign may or may not accomplish, Brown has already drawn a large group of anti-nuke, anti-draft young people into the political process.

Kennedy pursued many of the same

themes as Brown. Carter, he charged, was deliberately whipping up war fever to conceal the bankruptcy of his foreign and domestic policies. And Kennedy consistently reiterated the major points of his Georgetown University address: opposition to draft registration, the need for gasoline rationing, the danger of over-reaction to the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan. But Kennedy also relied heavily on residual family and ethnic loyalties among Maine's working class Catholic Democrats. Dozens of Kennedys criss-crossed the state.

In keeping with the "Support the President in a Time of Crisis" theme, Carter claimed to be too busy managing world affairs to come to Maine. But he sent his mother, his wife, his son, his vice president, and much of his cabinet. In addition, Carter telephoned dozens of Maine Democrats.

Most of the Democratic Party officials in Maine were pro-Carter, and there were persistent rumors that the overtly neutral Senator Muskie, still the most powerful figure in Maine politics, was quietly supporting Carter. But for one reason or another, the Carter forces never got themselves very well organized. A good deal of Carter money went into long television ads, often excerpts from the State of the Union speech. His campaign ignored domestic and local issues, except to send around a list of the political plums granted to the state by the Carter-Mondale administration.

In Orrington, a small (3000 pop.) farming and commuter town a few miles

south of Bangor, 82 Democrats came out for the Feb. 10 caucus. To understand the significance of this figure it is useful to know that 30 years ago there were only four Democrats living in this traditionally Republican town. The first Democratic caucus ever held in Orrington took place in 1968, and since then no caucus has drawn more than 12 voters. Slightly more than 30 participants in this year's caucus declared for Carter: most of them middle-aged or older, and almost all of them new to party politics. "Patriotism" was clearly the name of the game. The Kennedy supporters, a slightly smaller group, arrived in style, with plastic imitation straw boaters and mammoth posters. They were mostly very young and also new to politics. The 15 Brown supporters were an odd assortment—a DSOC member, some anti-nuke activists, a few conservatives who responded enthusiastically to Brown's advocacy of the balanced budget amendment.

The results in Orrington, three delegates for Carter, three for Kennedy, and one for Brown, broke down roughly the same as the state-wide vote.

Bangor, the third largest city of Maine, also saw a massive influx of new people into the Democratic Party. Two years ago about 600 people attended the caucus. This time between 1,100 and 1,200 voters arrived at an auditorium that could handle, at the most, 700 people. Brown supporters included a large University of Maine contingent, along with feminists, unemployed people, and

a group from the Maine Woodsmen's Association.

With the support of organized labor, Bangor's large Irish population and many old-line liberals, Kennedy dominated the caucus. The Carter effort was dominated by professionals within the party. Surprisingly, Carter also got most of the teachers, reportedly as a payoff for Carter's support of the new Department of Education. But Bangor teachers failed to turn out in sufficient numbers to guarantee a clear Carter victory. Bangor's 51 delegates to the state Democratic convention were allotted Kennedy 25, Carter 18, and Brown eight.

Carter ended with a statewide plurality of delegates in Maine, but by no means a clear majority. Both Kennedy and Brown presented alternatives to Carter's policy of bluster abroad and military pump-priming at home, and both won a significant response from Maine voters. Of perhaps greater interest is the fact that both the old pols and the Vietnam-era liberals were swamped by an influx of people embarking on their first adventures in political involvement. The newcomers were not indifferent to personalities, but there were real issues in this campaign, and Maine voters demonstrated that they will take the trouble to spend three or four hours in a caucus when important issues are at stake. ■

Russ Christensen and Burt Hatlen are DSOC members who live in the Bangor area. Christensen ran unsuccessfully for the state legislature in 1978.

By Beth Bogart

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Disclosures leaked to the press in the last month indicate that up to seven representatives and a senator may have been videotaped accepting bribes from FBI agents posing as Arab businessmen. The legislators named in the press reports of the undercover investigation, "Abscam" (for Arab scam) were: Senator Harrison Williams (D-N.J.) and Representatives John Murphy (D-N.Y.), Frank Thompson (D-N.J.), John Jenrette (D-S.C.), John Murtha (D-Pa.), Michael Myers (D-Pa.), Richard Kelly (R-Fla.) and Raymond Lederer (D-Pa.).

Mark Green, who directs Congress Watch, the lobbying arm of Ralph Nader's Public Citizen organization, has spent years investigating congressional conduct. He is the author of the Nader-sponsored study *WHO RUNS CONGRESS*, first published in 1972 and updated in 1975 and 1979. IN THESE TIMES correspondent Beth Bogart spoke with Green about the Abscam scandal.

Eight members of Congress recently have been named in newspaper accounts as possibly involved in bribery, influence peddling and other illegalities. How widespread do you think this alleged lawlessness is in Congress?

The so-called Abscam episode, based on initial reports, may be the largest scandal in congressional history, though it's certainly not the first. When I was writing *Who Runs Congress*, I tried to gather all instances in the past years when a member of Congress or his staff had either been indicted and convicted or indicted with trials still pending or been investigated for serious offenses by their ethics committees. I found that there were 46 members or staff who were in trouble with the law based on this standard. A few were "morality offenses," such as a couple congressmen caught soliciting prostitutes, which is illegal and probably not very nice but won't cause the fall of the American empire. Most of the cases, though, did involve dollar corruption—bribery, kickbacks, mail fraud. If anything, this trend toward crime is up; a *Washington Post* article six months ago by William Greider estimated that between 1941 and 1971, there were 15 criminal prosecutions in Congress, or an average of only one every two years. That's increased about ninefold in the last decade.

That would seem to make Congress have a higher crime rate than an average group of 535 American citizens. Is there a particular temptation for crime among members of Congress?

Jack Newfield of *The Village Voice* has said that the crime rate in Congress is probably higher than in downtown Detroit.

Why do members of Congress apparently engage in this activity? First, they are in a unique position to turn public office into private profit. Their votes and judgments, especially if they are committee chairs, can influence billions of dollars one way or another.

Indeed, that may be why more Democrats are involved in the recent charges because, as chairs, actual businessmen—or FBI agents imitating Arab businessmen—would be more likely to go to them than to your run-of-the-mill freshman Republican.

The second reason is that members of Congress have to raise money to run for re-election. To raise money, they have to go to a business community that invests rationally—that invests for a return. Here the return is votes or access. As a result, the morality of the marketplace infects the political arena.

Third, in the past law enforcement and congressional ethics committees have been so sluggish—if not somnolent—that a kind of climate of acquiescence was created.

The small potatoes—like abusing "perks" or office allowances—lead naturally to larger crimes. Members of Congress have had trouble drawing lines between what is proper and improper. This applies to petty crimes as well as big ones.



Corruption is in the system

Campaigns are costly and all but the wealthiest politicians have cash ties to special interests.

Do you think the Abscam revelations will have any effect on this "climate of acquiescence for criminal behavior on Capitol Hill?"

It's hard to say. If the evidence against most of these members is strong and if, over the course of the next year, several members are indicted and convicted, you'll have a situation where several sitting members of Congress are felons. At that point, I think ethics committees in each chamber will have to establish lucid standards for when a member is expelled or loses the right to vote, or when a member loses the right to chair a committee.

But based on the history of ethics committees, it's hard to be optimistic. In the past, they've only seen the light when they've felt the heat. This lassitude is in keeping with their history.

In the first 175 years of the Congress, neither the House nor the Senate had an ethics committee. A kind of laissez-faire attitude applied through the 1950s, best captured by former Speaker Sam Rayburn's comment that if a member's done anything wrong, it's up to his or her voters to do something about it.

This rationale could not survive the Bobby Baker affair in the early 1960s. As a result of that scandal, ethics committees were created in each chamber. For the first couple of years, no senators were assigned to the Senate committee. They investigated Tom Dodd in 1966 only after journalists Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson had exposed him in their columns. Then it was 12 years before the Senate ethics committee looked at another senator, when they studied—and eventually "denounced"—Herman Talmadge (D-Ga.) in October 1979.

In the early 1970s, for example, the Senate ethics committee neither penalized nor even seriously investigated the fact that Gulf Oil Co. had given \$45,000 in campaign cash to Minority Leader Hugh Scott. In a closed session, reportedly, Scott touchingly told his potential investigators that he had given all the money to other senators' campaigns.

How is the alleged bribery uncovered by Abscam any different from a member receiving huge campaign contributions from a special interest and then voting as that special interest asks?

The difference between a "bribe" and a "contribution" can be understood perhaps by a Harvard law professor, but probably not by a citizen or a Martian.

That is, if you give someone money and say, "Sure hope you'll help me out on a vote," that's a bribe. If you give someone money and say, "That's a contribution and I'll be talking to you tomorrow about my legislative agenda," that's probably not a bribe.

The problem is that all of Congress is infected by this form of institutionalized bribery. All members, other than those with great personal wealth, have to raise money from the private sector to run for Congress. And if someone gives you a lot of money, you will quite predictably be sensitive and appreciative of their needs to ensure future contributions. Most members feel that way even as they despise the system that forces them to act that way.

What are the chances of proving a bribery charge against a member of Congress?

The Supreme Court has said that you cannot use as evidence in a bribery case a member's past votes, because that would require the court to examine the motivation behind the votes, which is imper-

missible. This makes it very hard to obtain successful bribery prosecutions. But to accept money with a promise of future favors may be admissible.

How many lawmakers are lawbreakers—all, most, a dozen?

Mark Twain once said: "There is no distinctly American criminal class except Congress." Most members of Congress are honorable public servants. But many are involved in petty illegalities: they misuse the staff, they take junkets.

A real problem with Abscam is that a lot of the public is going to say, "They all do it." When the public gets that indiscriminate sense that all their public officials are trying to do well rather than do good, then the level of participation and interest in a functioning democracy collapses. Then you can't tell the difference between a member of Congress who's trying to do a good job and a member who's trying to engage in what a Tammany Hall pol used to call "legal graft." Because ultimately the way to deter congressional crime is for the public to penalize felons in elections.

In our survey, we found that of 11 members of Congress charged with illegal conduct during the 1970s, seven were re-elected in the next election. Unless the public worries about congressional crime, they will get the representation they deserve.

What other reforms besides relying on the electorate to throw out confirmed crooks would bring more "law and order" to the halls of Congress?

Continued on page 11.

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EUROPE



Soviet president Brezhnev consults with West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt. Last year, trade between their two countries totalled \$7 million.

New strain put on fragile East-West ties

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

HELMUT SCHMIDT IS WORKING hard to save West Germany's *Ostpolitik* from the combined blows of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and two election campaigns—his own and Jimmy Carter's.

The Social Democratic Party's (SPD) "eastern policy" initiated by Willy Brandt is not just a matter of lucrative trade deals with Eastern European communist countries. It is also a long-term effort to break the dangerous deadlock resulting from the post-World War II division of Germany. The policy has meant recognizing and moving to assuage the Russians' nearly paranoid (but based on the reality of 20 million war dead) fear of Germany by accepting the post-war map of central Europe and seeking normal relations with eastern neighbors—especially East Germany. The idea has been to de-dramatize the East-West division enough to get the Russians to relax and allow the growth of peaceful contacts that can eventually lead to a closer and more healthy relationship between the two Germans.

This is a subtle and long-range policy directed at opening up new creative prospects rather than at achieving some specific well-defined aims. Americans have not shown much interest or understanding. But *Ostpolitik* has already touched the lives of millions of Germans. Last year, nearly one and a half million retired East Germans were allowed to visit relatives in West Germany, while over eight million West Germans visited relatives in East Germany. Contacts have been developing cautiously on the government level, and Schmidt occasionally talks on the telephone with East German party and government leader Erich Honnecker.

For this process to continue, both Germans must avoid arousing suspicions of disloyalty to their respective superpower protectors. The parallel dependence that divides them also helps develop a certain subtle complicity.

The widespread disapproval of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan has moved Moscow to tighten the reins on its Eastern European allies, at the same time that Washington is trying to round up its own team. According to Schmidt, the USSR has obliged Warsaw Pact states to cancel or suspend a number of official meetings with Western officials in order

to prevent them from sharing their thinly veiled criticism of the Soviet action.

But *Ostpolitik*'s did not start with Afghanistan. Bonn knew the decision to station American nuclear missiles on West German soil would severely strain relations with Moscow. Initially, the SPD wanted to refuse the missiles. But the U.S. insisted. The Americans seemed oblivious to the Social Democrats' worry that the prospect of a West Germany with full or partial control of a nuclear strike force might frighten the Russians into slamming shut those unpredictable openings between East and West Germany. So the SPD consoled itself by taking the position that the decision to accept the missiles would actually contribute to advancing the much-desired negotiations on reducing arms levels in central Europe, notably SALT II. But meanwhile, SALT II has fallen by the wayside and the Americans show no interest in trying to reduce nuclear armament in the European theater.

Thus *Ostpolitik*'s very existence is threatened before it has had a chance to work the gradual but profound historic transformations hoped for. In purely economic terms, East Germany can be shown to have profited more than West Germany, thanks to currency brought by the eight million annual West German visitors and numerous taxes on services to West Berlin. If cut off now, it could simply be made to look like a bunch of overly generous and fruitless concessions to the other side. And this is an election year, and that is the way Schmidt's Christian Democratic opponent Franz Josef Strauss can try to portray SPD policy.

It should be recalled that the Christian Democrats, headed by Konrad Adenauer, preferred the division of Germany to its possible reunification as a neutralized state on the Austrian model (a solution there is reason to believe the USSR might have accepted) both because they wanted a firm attachment to the West, and because the Prussian area of Germany abandoned to the Soviet sphere was a traditional socialist stronghold whose reunification with West Germany would ensure a solid SPD majority nationwide.

In this context, the flourishing trade between West Germany and Eastern Europe is also a political insurance against opposition to *Ostpolitik* from either the German business community or from Moscow.

West Germany is the Soviet Union's most important western trade partner. Trade last year totalled 13 billion marks

(nearly \$7 billion) with the balance slightly—600 million marks—in favor of the USSR for the first time, thanks mainly to price increases for Soviet-exported natural gas and other raw materials.

Sanctions.

When U.S. deputy secretary of state Warren Christopher went to Bonn last month to rally support to American economic sanctions against the USSR, he did not get very far. Christopher reportedly asked the Germans to withhold tax advantages on credits for eastern trade (such tax advantages do not exist, so there was no problem) and to stop underwriting eastern trade with government insurance. On the second point, the Germans replied that government insurance on East-bloc trade was highly profitable because of the reliability of Soviet trade partners. Besides, this insurance was written into trade treaties and could not be revoked without illegally repudiating the treaties.

The American envoy then told the Germans that the U.S. was preparing a list of strategic goods to submit to the Atlantic Alliance's Coordinating Committee for East-West Trade Policy (called "Cocom"). Would the Germans agree to ban export of the blacklisted goods to the Soviet Union? Schmidt reportedly replied that Bonn would go along with any unanimous decision taken by Cocom—a way of saying "yes" to mean "no" since France can presumably be counted on to prevent any unanimous decision.

In any case, the Cocom boycott would probably concentrate on sophisticated computer systems and spare the machinery that make up the bulk of West German exports, although much of the machinery includes computerized guidance systems.

Acting "more American than the Americans" may give Strauss his one big chance to come from behind and defeat Schmidt. Fear of Soviet armies is very real in West Germany—as real as fear of Germany in Russia. Washington can ultimately force Bonn into any line it wants because West Germany is totally dependent on the U.S. nuclear umbrella for its defense from Soviet power. The U.S. has only to hint—as some American commentators have been doing—that Schmidt is a faithless ally for Franz Josef Strauss to move in for a political K.O. The anti-German and anti-American feelings a Strauss victory would arouse throughout Europe is the sort of political problem American leaders tend to overlook in their delight with any for-

eign politician who is ostentatiously pro-American and anti-communist.

Schmidt is politically obliged to reiterate his unswerving devotion to the Atlantic Alliance and U.S. leadership. At the same time, he is trying to save his bridges to the East. For help in this delicate course, he flew to Paris at the beginning of this month for a particularly intensive three-day summit with President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. A dozen cabinet members took part in the biggest step yet toward Franco-German coordination. The joint desire to preserve some "leeway" (and shared irritation over Mrs. Thatcher's tantrums) have brought Paris and Bonn rapidly closer.

The French particularly want to maintain some semblance of independence in the Third World, where they figure anti-Americanism is stronger than anti-Soviet feeling and thus trying to force countries to choose between a U.S. or Soviet-led bloc would be disastrous for the West.

Europeans are also reluctant to be stampeded into imitating Carter's new tough stance, which they suspect might turn out to be an election-year pose. Europeans note that the Soviet military intervention against the Hafizullah Amin regime in Afghanistan was clearly predicted by western diplomats and press reports months before it took place, and that the U.S. government apparently did nothing to head it off by making it clear to the Kremlin that this is where it was drawing the line. Now Carter has rushed to take all the retaliatory measures that, if held in reserve, might serve as bargaining levers.

Many Europeans believe that current U.S. policy makers—Carter and his security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski in particular—do not understand the Russians, and hence have behaved towards them in ways the Russians in turn fail to understand, producing a dangerous spiral of suspicion and subjectively defensive actions seen by the other side as aggressive.

In their joint communiqué at the end of their Paris summit, Schmidt and Giscard expressed concern that the current crisis could set off a process in which "one thing leading to another, regardless of the intentions involved, could have the gravest consequences for the world." They insisted that the Soviet Union withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, reiterated their fidelity to the Atlantic Alliance and warned that détente, which had "become more difficult and uncertain" as a result of the invasion of Afghanistan, "would not resist another such shock."

SOUTH AFRICA

Black workers win strike against Ford

Action by workers in three industries and a strong community group offer a new model for political mobilization.

By Our Southern
Africa Correspondent

IN 1973, ABOUT 100,000 WORKERS paralyzed Durban, South Africa's third-largest city, with a massive, spontaneous wave of strikes. The militant (but peaceful) work stoppages shattered the labor peace of the preceding decade and set in motion what is today a major effort by government and business to encourage and install tame, "responsible" unions.

Demands in the Durban strikes were almost exclusively for higher wages. But the impressive size of the upheaval posed a tantalizing question: Could South Africa's huge black working class use its labor power as a political weapon, despite the difficulties of operating in a police state?

That question has now been answered in the affirmative by workers in Port Elizabeth, an industrial city on the southern coast. There, workers in three large industries, principally the Ford Motor Company, have carried out a series of successful wildcat strikes that have been coordinated closely with a powerful, militant community association.

The strikes began in late October, when Ford refused to reinstate a draftsman named Thozamile Botha. The young, magnetic black consciousness leader is also head of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Association (Pebco), and he charged Ford had ordered him to choose between the organization and his job. Immediately, about 700 Ford workers walked out to support Botha. Two days later, the company reinstated him.

But the Ford workers had sensed their power. In November, they staged three more wildcats, partly over economic issues (equal pay for equal work, better training for blacks), and partly for less tangible reasons (the company refused to transfer a white foreman who had insulted them). Later in the month they were joined by black workers at other Port Elizabeth plants: 900 General Tire employees carried out two wildcats, and 400 more at a paper mill walked out once.

The strikers worked closely with Pebco, which regularly attracted crowds of up to 10,000 to its meetings. The Ford workers by-passed their existing union, the United Auto Workers, even though it is regarded as one of the most progressive labor organizations in the country. The UAW president admitted that some workers considered it a "puppet organization."

In late November Ford decided it had had enough. It fired all the strikers and announced it would only take them back as "new" workers, with the loss of accrued benefits. (Most of the strikers at the other two companies were rehired.)

At first, it appeared Ford had the upper hand. Black unemployment is high, and it seemed the company would have no trouble luring old workers back, or getting new ones. Also, security police detained 20 of the strikers and later charged them under the Riotous Assemblies Act.

But the workers stood firm, and gained



Black strikers at Ford's Port Elizabeth plant by-passed their union—the UAW—which many consider a "puppet organization."

national—and international—attention. Ford's reputation as an enlightened employer in South Africa began to tarnish. The U.S. consul from Cape Town visited the plant, and civil rights leader Jesse Jackson tried (and failed) to get permission to come and investigate. A national black consciousness group, the Azanian People's Organization, started to raise money for the strikers. Few of the old workers re-applied for their jobs, and Ford was faced with the unpleasant prospect of training an entirely new work force.

In early January, Ford capitulated. All the workers were re-hired, without forfeiting their benefits or seniority.

New campaigns.

Meanwhile, Pebco was turning its attention to other matters. The 6,000 people of Walmer, a black enclave of Port Elizabeth, are scheduled to be forcibly moved in March to a township outside the city. Residents of Walmer are happy where they are, and there is a housing shortage in the township, but the enclave is a "black spot" in a designated "white area," and the residents have exhausted their appeals.

Pebco planned a protest campaign, including a one-day strike, against the removals. But the security police moved first, arresting Botha and three other leaders and holding them in indefinite detention. The situation was briefly explosive, but then Pebco's remaining leadership called off the protest—for now.

The organization remains intact, and

very much a major factor in the industrial and community life of Port Elizabeth. Its coordinated, mixed approach to fighting apartheid is likely to be duplicated elsewhere. Botha has said repeatedly he favors non-violence, which of course is a sensible view in a police state. But he also recognizes Nelson Mandela, the imprisoned president of the largest guerrilla movement, the African National Congress, as the true leader of black South Africa.

ANC guerrillas are slowly, and successfully stepping up their attacks (they concentrate on police stations), and they will probably be the major factor in the growing struggle. But if the Pebco uprising is any indication, the guerrillas can reasonably expect to be helped by

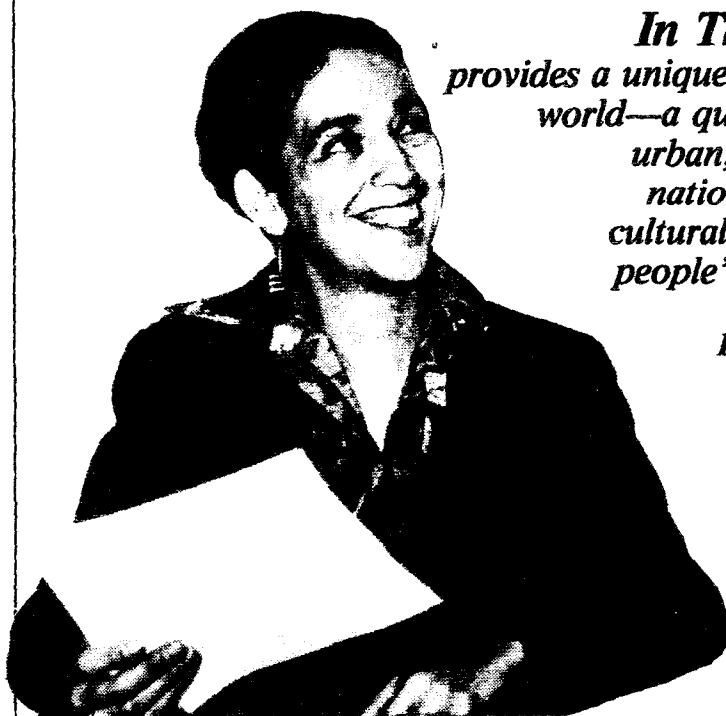
the political mobilization of the country's black labor force.

The Port Elizabeth episode also points up the weakness of the Sullivan Principles and other codes of conduct supposed to regulate foreign companies doing business in South Africa. Ford is one of the leading proponents of the codes, and Botha himself has called the company "a very progressive employer by South African standards."

But the Sullivan Principles did not prevent Ford's management from acting with ruthlessness when they were pressured. And the kind of change the Ford workers are fighting for, both at the workplace and in their country at large, is far more sweeping than anything addressed by the codes of conduct.

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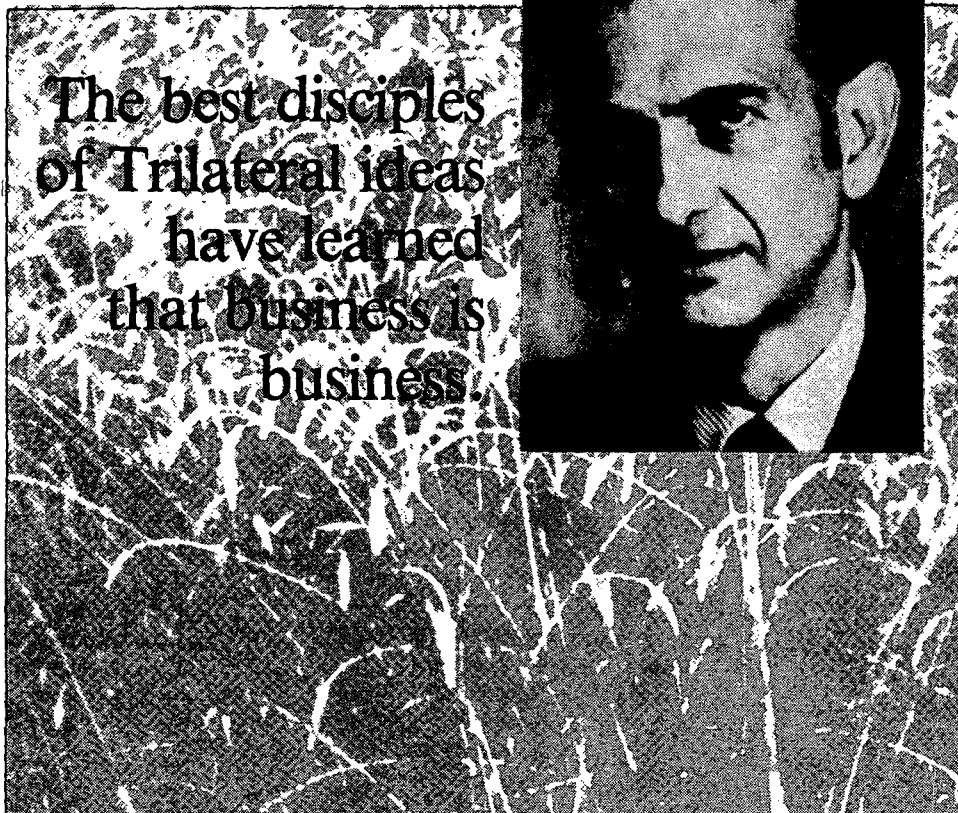
Argentina's sales to Russia defy U.S. embargo

By Diana Johnstone

IN THE NAME OF THE UNYIELDING battle against "international Marxist subversion," the Argentine military regime in the last four years has murdered thousands of people, "disappeared" thousands more, banned political parties and labor unions, sent anonymous death squads to carry off and assassinate noted lawyers, journalists, unionists, nuns, even an occasional bishop or exiled foreign dignitary. If you can't count on a government like that to rally to the defense of the free world against Soviet communist expansionism, what *can* you count on?

Moreover, Argentina is not just any old military dictatorship. The regime, and especially its civilian minister of economy, Jose Alfredo Martinez de Hoz, has consistently been the darling of the Trilateral Commission and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). "There are important affinities between the Argentine government's economic plan and the Trilateral's ideological framework. We are seeking to integrate Argentina into the world economy," as economy ministry official Luis Garcia Martinez put it.

To fit Argentina into the world economy, Martinez de Hoz has taken measures to dismantle the domestic industry that made the country relatively self-sufficient and brought jobs and prosperity to Argentine workers and industrialists. The (shrunk) domestic market for manufactured goods is to be filled by foreign imports. All tax breaks and oth-



Minister of the Economy Martinez de Hoz advised the Argentine junta "not to give in to American paternalism."

er official encouragements are lavished on one sector, grain exports, which has prospered accordingly, to the great joy of the big landowners and financiers (like Martinez de Hoz himself) who control it. Argentine grain exports, which a decade ago ran around 11 million tons in good years, soared to a record 19.5 million tons last year.

Argentina has thus been a vanguard model of the more interdependent world

division of labor sought by American nancial planners. Trilateral Commission founder David Rockefeller himself has rewarded these praiseworthy efforts by organizing businessmen's trips to Argentina and speaking on that country's behalf to business circles in the U.S. The IMF has rewarded Buenos Aires with the biggest credit line ever granted a South American country. Jose Martinez de Hoz has been celebrated in American business publications as the economic genius of our time, a veritable miracle man.

But there has been a certain schizophrenia in American policy towards Argentina. Certainly the support of Rockefeller and the banking community has been unflagging. But when Rockefeller's Trilateral pupil Jimmy Carter set out to give a new morally uplifted tone to his administration by displaying concern for human rights all around the world, he could scarcely overlook Argentina. Even had he wanted to, Congress had already got wind of the horrendous kidnappings and massacres regularly perpetrated by Argentine security forces.

To be convincing, the post-Vietnam halo had to be inspired by moral concern transcending anti-communism. So the Carter administration allowed its special moral conscience department headed by Patricia Derian to display disapproval for the flagrant violations of human rights in Argentina. It was completely ineffectual, so why should anyone get upset? But the Argentine military caste

is easily offended, and some of them seemed annoyed at Americans' failure to realize that, to carry out the cherished Martinez de Hoz economic policies they all praised so enthusiastically, it was absolutely necessary to terrorize, repress and even murder a substantial part of the population.

The embargo.

After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Carter suddenly seemed to see the error of his ways, especially when Argentina showed no eagerness to go along with his grain embargo on the USSR. Carter dispatched General Jackson Goodpaster to Buenos Aires to inform our Argentine friends that, the world having turned out to be such an imperfect place, the U.S. administration no longer considered human rights a "priority." Certain regrettable abuses could be overlooked in return for refusal to help the Russians make up the 17 million tons of American grain cut off by President Carter's embargo. While General Goodpaster was in the Argentine capital, American diplomatic sources intimated to journalists that his mission was succeeding.

But scarcely had he left town than a top-level Soviet trade delegation shopping for grain and other foodstuffs was given a much warmer reception. Argentine officials issued numerous statements declaring their firm attachment to western civilization—and the world market. The USSR has long been one of Argentina's best customers, and business is business. Ideology has nothing to do with it, especially since the Argentine left is mostly made up of odd things like Peronists or Montoneros, whereas the pro-Moscow Argentine Communist Party, unlike other left groups, has not been banned but only "suspended," and tries to find ways to give qualified support to the fiercely "anti-Communist" military regime. An occasional Communist still gets abducted or assassinated by security forces, but in Argentina, that can happen to almost anybody.

Gen. Roberto Viola, a likely candidate to succeed head of state Jorge Videla, warned that 1980 would be a "hard year" for Argentine-U.S. relations, what with the pressures of Soviet-U.S. tension and an American election campaign.

One of the wildest scourges of the left, General Iberico Saint Jean, turned out to have strong humanitarian feelings for the Soviet people. He condemned the American grain embargo as "an attack on the lives of the people who live in the country being punished, especially the children."

The unkindest cut of all came from Dr. Martinez de Hoz himself, who advised the junta "not to give in to American paternalism."

Informed sources said the Russians arranged for shipment of a ton of wheat, and bought two tons of corn as well as beef and soybeans, with the possibility left open of further purchases in coming months. The Soviet buyers left Buenos Aires on Feb. 1 "very satisfied," on their way to Brazil, whose dealers were reportedly willing and able to sell them much more.

Britain: Stop Violating Irish Human Rights!

Since internment was introduced by the British in 1971 human rights have been grossly violated in Northern Ireland. Britain's cruel methods of sensory deprivation, torture and its juryless courts have been condemned by Amnesty International and the European Court of Human Rights. Now the British refuse to allow Amnesty International into the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, which contain perhaps the worse conditions of any prison in the world today. Human rights activists throughout the world, including Nobel Peace Prize winner Sean McBride, have condemned Britain's cruelty in the H-Blocks. Human rights advocates in North America, too, have now spoken out against the H-Blocks by supporting the following demands of the political prisoners and their supporting organization, the Relatives Action Committees:

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ISRAEL

Economic issues may be decisive in Israeli elections next year

By David Mandel

TEL AVIV

EVEN IF MENACHEM BEGIN'S now-fragile government lasts its full term, parliamentary elections are scheduled in Israel for mid-1981 and the country's existing and potential parties are now beginning to experience pre-vote turmoil.

The Labor Party, which early polls favor to regain the power it lost suddenly in 1977, went through the motions in mid-January of confirming Shimon Peres' position as number one. The vote in the 900-person central committee was two to one, but by no means final. The party will hold a convention in spring, and Peres' main rival, Yigal Allon, who was number two for over ten years under Levi Eshkol, Golda Meir and Yitzhak Rabin, argued that the outgoing central committee had no authority to endorse Peres as candidate for the premiership. To avoid certain defeat, Allon did not announce his candidacy now, but Peres, who hopes for an early election, pushed for and got the vote of confidence.

Peres was traditionally considered to be on the party's right—he broke away briefly in 1965 to form Rafi with David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Dayan. But since taking over the top spot three years ago from Rabin (then discredited because of an illegal bank account in the U.S. and now ostracized for his below-the-belt attacks on Peres in a book several months ago) Peres has played the role of unifier, winning friends from all party factions including the "left." The debate between him and Allon, also a centrist par excellence, has been amazingly devoid of ideological or even policy questions. It has boiled down to a personality contest and a rivalry between power centers, with Peres representing those entrenched in top positions, Allon trying to build a base in the kibbutz movement, and other, small blocs waiting to see which way the wind blows.

On the main political issues, Labor still incorporates a diversity ranging from (Peres-backers) Abba Eban and Yossi Sarid—who support, under certain conditions, talks with Palestinians and are willing to consider withdrawal from almost all of the West Bank and Gaza and the establishment of a Palestinian state—to others who attack the Begin government for having given away too much to Egypt. This disunity, plus the knowledge that the Likud government's weak link is its voters' pocketbooks, will lead Labor to try to avoid political issues and concentrate on economic ones, just as Begin and company successfully did in 1977. But Labor has no clear economic platform; and although the situation three years ago does not look so bad, compared to the present, it wasn't very good either.

Likud economic ministers have finally had to stop blaming the country's economic problems—slowed growth, yawning balance-of-payments deficit despite over \$2 billion in U.S. aid, and triple-digit inflation, highest on basic necessities—on their Labor predecessors. And in the last several months, new Finance Minister Yigael Hurvitz has significantly improved the government's popularity simply by talking tough and sounding like he knows what he is doing.

Hurvitz unquestionably has displayed more will than his predecessor Simcha Ehrlich, who clumsily introduced foreign currency liberalization in 1977 and tried to implement an austerity program

essentially similar to the one Hurvitz is now pushing: drastic reductions in state spending, especially for most of the population; an end to easy credit, except to export manufacturers, with the stated purpose of forcing "inefficient" businesses to close and creating "temporary" unemployment, after which formerly unproductive workers of all sorts will presumably find jobs in export industries. (Arabs will be the first to be laid off, Hurvitz recently reassured his critics in a country that is especially afraid of potential emigration by unemployed Jews. The more astute critics, of course, asked out loud what effect this would have on the relative quiet in the occupied territories.)

Public resistance.

Public resistance, applied in many cases through strikes and threats by unions and the Labor-controlled Histadrut workers association, was a major factor in foiling Ehrlich's attempts at austerity. But there was also pressure in the cabinet, where personal rivalries and ministers' fears of unpopularity in the face of public resistance prevented drastic cuts and kept wages almost even with inflation.

Hurvitz is a no-nonsense ex-dairy owner whose political roots are with Peres and Dayan in Rafi but who continued rightward and heads only a small faction inside the Likud bloc. More immune to intra-party competition, he cut food subsidies in November, froze government-backed credit and slashed the 1980-81 state budget by 5 percent in real terms. On January 27, the cabinet approved his total figure, but now the real fight—over which ministries are to suffer the worst cuts—is beginning. (No cuts were proposed for the defense budget, which will rise 10 percent.)

Social Affairs Minister Israel Katz has objected to the proposed 8 percent cut in his fiefdom, ridiculing Hurvitz's promise that the very poor, who depend most on state aid, will not lose out. But Katz's centrist Democratic Movement (led by Yigael Yadin) has splintered and buckled under so much since its appearance on the scene in 1977 that his pleas do not carry much clout.

More serious a challenge to Hurvitz has come from Housing Minister David Levy, the only cabinet member of Oriental Jewish extraction and a growing political force in Begin's Herut Party faction. Levy was the only minister to oppose the proposed budget figure, calling it "confused, confusing and devoid of social sensitivity." He has made a personal crusade against the Finance Ministry's attempt to freeze housing allocations at their present level despite a glaring shortage and to cut child allowance payments. Levy has apparently won the Prime Minister's backing for these politically poignant demands, and in the process has made himself nearly indispensable to the Likud's future—the bloc's most important electoral base in 1977 was precisely in the largely Oriental Jewish working class and poor neighborhoods.

No one is openly challenging Begin's position as leader of the Likud, but various maneuvers and informal alliances have been made in anticipation of his eventual retirement—in his late 60s, Begin suffered a serious heart attack in 1977 and a stroke last fall. Defense Minister Ezer Weizman, who now enjoys the popularity that military chiefs in Israel almost always have, is favored by most of the liberals...and by Levy. More traditional Herut hard-liners oppose Weizman, but their right flank has been ex-

For now, Shimon Peres is the preferred Labor Party candidate for premier.

Likud efforts to cut the state budget already have produced controversy, and there is rising popular resistance to government policies that are intended to increase unemployment and lower the standard of living for most Israelis.

posed by the defection of several of the hardest-liners to the Tehiya (Renaissance) party formed in opposition to the peace treaty with Egypt.

Despite all their internal squabbles and growing public cynicism about both parties, one of Israel's two major blocs—Labor or Likud—is still likely to rule after the next elections. Hopes of forging a liberal center—which hypothetically could lead both the rightward-drifting Labor majority and the Likud "realists," and perhaps eventually unite them—were dashed for now with the splintering of Yadin's movement, though there is some talk of trying again.

The left.

The Liberal Peace Now movement, already strained by the need to address the divisive Palestinian question, is also being forced to consider its electoral alternatives. There has been some talk of it trying to form a party, but it is considered more likely that various of the group's leaders will be co-opted by Labor and/or the left-Zionist Sheli.

The left historically has been handicapped in attempts to organize along class lines by its adoption of unpopular "pro-Arab" positions. In the last few years neither the pro-Soviet Communist Party (Rakah), the Sheli, nor any other group has posed a significant alternative to the Jewish working class. Rakah still enjoys wide support among Israeli Arabs, but even there it is under increasing attack by more militant "rejectionist" nationalists on one side and attempts to build a Moslem revivalist movement on the other. Sheli recently squandered the slight chance it had of gaining entrance into the Oriental Jewish communities by narrowly voting not to honor a pre-election agreement by which parliament member Meir Pa'il was supposed to bow out at midterm in favor of Black Panther leader Sa'adia Marciano.

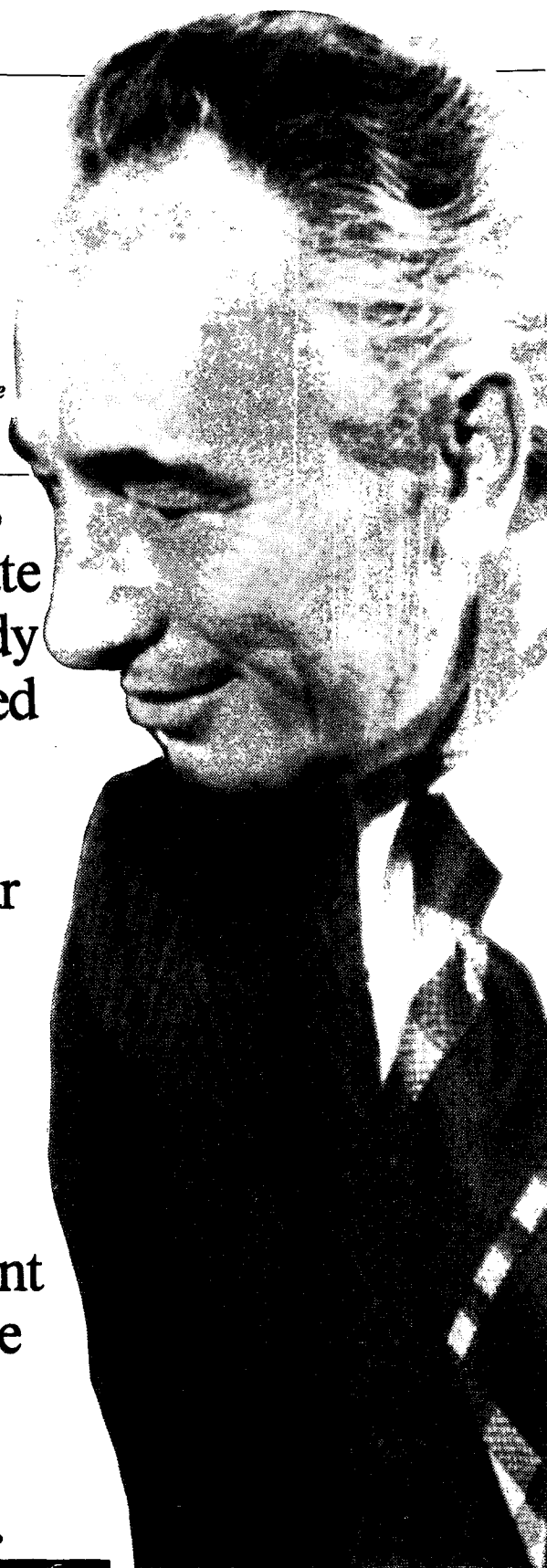
The Sheli reversal came at a most un-

fortunate time; now more than ever before it is possible to speak against government foreign policy in the slums of Israeli cities. Marciano and the other Black Panthers centered around Charles Biton—who entered parliament in 1977 by aligning with Rakah—have renewed their activity and won a hearing among their alienated constituency by denouncing the millions being spent for West Bank settlements while social service and housing funds are cut. If, for the first time, these sentiments were translated into serious organizational work, there could be explosive results.

But a January survey found that Hurvitz's popularity has remained high so far. A planned one-day protest strike in December was cancelled by the Histadrut when it became clear that it would flop. A major government victory was registered a few weeks later when El Al workers quickly bowed to pressure, accepting layoffs and wage cuts "to save the company." The Histadrut protested only mildly, and meanwhile signed a cost-of-living increase agreement for January that leaves most workers far short of the last three months' price rises.

On Jan. 27, 100,000 mostly industrial workers in a number of Israel's largest unions did manage to organize a one-day strike, totally without Histadrut help. The country's two teachers unions were also escalating their partial strikes against the disastrous erosion their already low income has suffered in the last two years.

If Labor manages to maintain unity on political questions and mounts a firm attack on the Likud government's economic policy, it may attract enough votes to regain power by next year. But unless it or parties further to the left can come up with an attractive and effective program for the working class, abstention is likely to be the biggest electoral winner in the near future.



LETTERS

IN THESE TIMES is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

FLAWED

I WONDER IF PAT AUFDERHEIDE AND I saw the same edition of *10*. After I saw it (with my wife), we marveled at how absolutely flawed and ridiculous the man was portrayed—a bundle of exaggerated crises, self-indulgent, a lightweight. In contrast, the two women were played straight—essentially well-integrated, relaxed, self-assured, confident as women. One woman also had a successful career. But the reviewer thought that this film never had a "clue that over a decade of reawakened feminism and organized women's movement had preceded them" and that the man was the "most human of the characters."

As fairly recent subscribers, we hope that the other material in *IN THESE TIMES* is somewhat more reliable.

Robert T. Jordan
Alexandria, Va.

WONDERING

INSTEAD OF SIMPLY USING HER WORDS as a rather chintzy headline, how come you didn't explain "economic autarky" to Elissa James? For James' sake, may I point out that the expression is not really highbrow, just seldom heard these days. In the days of fas-m the fascist (they preferred to be called "nationalist") governments actively pursued such policies. It means "self-sufficiency." For instance, in the Middle Ages a monastery in north France might acquire southern vineyards so that they'd have a balanced cellar of proper wines of their own production.

I also find Diana Johnstone to be nearly as much an epitome of the things of *IN THESE TIMES* I can't quite enthuse about as is John Judis. Judis is much more convincing in his facile responses to complaints than in the writings that inspired those complaints—until I stop to ask, "Which of these is the *real* John Judis?" Then I start wondering if either is.

-Clifton Amsbury
Richmond, Calif.

PREMATURE FUNERAL

I WAS BOTH SAD AND ANGRY TO see you participate in a funeral for the Madison Press Connection (*ITT*, Jan. 16). Our paper is not dead, it has run out of money to publish as a daily and must hibernate a short while. The paper's community and staff supporters are trying to bring home to the board of directors that we take the concept of a community newspaper seriously. We will continue to stand behind the paper in order to preserve its function as an independent, humanist voice amidst the sea of media hype. It's important that \$24,000 were raised in an emergency fundraising effort over four days. This happened even under the most adverse conditions such as the lack of board support, no warning, students away over vacation and post-Christmas poverty.

I hope the board also chooses to keep the mission and spirit of the *Connection* alive by risking a commitment to at least a small weekly paper in conjunction with continued fundraising efforts, maybe even on a national basis. Heck, the *Press Connection* has shareholders from all over the world!

As America marches into the '80s and toward fascism, I can't think of any cause more important than preserving our sources of information. As things stand now, the possibility of returning as a weekly seems increasingly likely, so let's celebrate birth instead of being so eager to mourn death.

-Laura Berger
Madison, Wis.

SPORTING SEGREGATION

I FOUND YOUR APPROACH TO THE Superbowl fascinating (*ITT*, Jan. 23). I hope that, from time to time, you will use the approach of several different people briefly commenting on a subject in other areas as well.

As for the Superbowl itself, it is certainly an overblown commercial hype. But it also reflects the S.O.S. (Same Old Segregation) of American sports in general. The quarterbacks, punters, kickers, centers, owners, head coaches, and most of the linebackers were white. Most of the running backs, wide receivers, and defensive backs were black. Most of the fans who shelled out \$30 per ticket were white.

In what I hope will be an Olympic year, it should be noted that there will be no black athletes or officials at the Winter Olympics and that black athletes compete in only four of the sports contested at the Summer Olympics.

Reverse discrimination, anyone?

-Lee Baillinger
Warren, Ohio

DOUBLE STANDARD I

I AM DISMAYED BY LOUIS MENASHE'S piece on the Russian move into Afghanistan (*ITT*, Jan. 23).

Under the pretense of analysis, Menashe offers an apologia for the Russian action. His final paragraph ("...the force that seems to be required to lift third world...") is nothing short of an advocacy of the same cultural imperialism that *ITT* would be the first to abhor if it were exhibited by Uncle Sam. Why the dispensation for the Russian bear?

-Kai Goldhirsch
Brooklyn, N.Y.

DOUBLE STANDARD II

SEVERAL RECENT ARTICLES IN *ITT* have shown an alarming tendency toward a double standard in judging the actions of Communist and non-Communist nations. Diane Johnstone has compared the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, which has resulted in the continuing occupation of that country and the oppression of its inhabitants, with the action of Tanzania in liberating Uganda from Amin. And Louis Menashe has written that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which also seems likely to lead to an indefinite occupation of that country and oppression of its people, should instead be seen as a "move...designed to protect a progressive Afghan political front against internal reaction."

ITT is committed to a platform of democratic socialism. Neither the actions of Vietnam in Cambodia nor those of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan can be condoned by socialists. If *ITT* continues to print Soviet apologetics it will foster the widespread public

identification of socialism with the oppressive acts, internal and external, of the Soviet Union and its satellite states, which is still a major obstacle to developing a viable socialist movement in the U.S., as it has been for the last half century.

-Richard L. Abel
Santa Monica, Calif.

DOUBLE STANDARD III

AS THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION tries to gear up this country for a renewal of intensive Cold War activity, it is extremely important for anti-imperialist leftists to establish clear grounds for our opposition to this effort. A renewed movement against the draft and the social costs of militarization will doubtless once again offer an opportunity to challenge the American imperial establishment.

But if we want legitimately and effectively to contest American imperialism, we must be forthright in rejecting the oppressive social system offered as its replacement by the Communists. In this light, it was disturbing to read Louis Menashe's treatment of the Russian invasion of Afghanistan (*ITT*, Jan. 23). Menashe implies that the USSR's invasion has to be understood or perhaps even supported because "the Soviet move is designed to protect a progressive Afghan political front against internal reaction." To buttress his argument Menashe points to the tribalistic and feudal character of the Afghan rebels.

As we read Menashe's words we realized that they sounded eerily similar to recent remarks of several liberal friends concerning Iran. These friends have begun a kind of retrospective softening of their attitude toward American support of the Shah in the face of the veil-mongering feudalism of Khomeini's regime. At least, they suggest, the Shah was bringing the Iranian people into the twentieth century—even if in an admittedly undemocratic fashion.

Just as the left should not be seduced by the "modernization" of the Shah with his SAVAK-enforced capitalism, it must not be lured by a drive to modernize Afghanistan powered by Soviet tanks. Accepting either of these profoundly anti-democratic means for modernizing the Third World would invalidate our own vision and declare the struggle for democracy and socialism to be irrelevant in these times. It would add power to both reactionary systems at our own expense by failing to pose another choice: the democratic modernization of the Third World which would be made possible by a left victory in America and elsewhere.

Only the building of such a revolutionary and democratic international alternative can save countries like Afghanistan from bearing the "great cost" for modernization that Menashe is ready to see them pay—"single-party regimes, political authoritarianism and ideological conformity backed by security apparatuses and, if necessary, Soviet troops."

The first contribution Americans can make toward building such an alternative is to take a clear position on the emerging crisis in the Persian Gulf. We must resist our own government's political, military and economic aggression against the self-determination of Iran and other peoples in the region, and we must demand that the Soviet Union end its occupation of Afghanistan immediately.

-Jeanne Linden, Lois Weiner
New York

Editor's Note: The *ITT* position was stated in our editorial last week.

MEDICAL ABUSE

THE NOTORIOUS ELIZABETH Moore strikes again.

Being poor in contemporary America means being deprived of choices in virtually all areas of life. We cannot be selective about *where* we live or *how* we

live. The reason is simple: we are financially unable to afford the alternatives.

In her letter to the editor (*ITT*, Jan. 23), Audrey Patton suggests that there is no such thing as an involuntary abortion. As a public aid recipient, I beg to differ with her. The lack of affordable housing, inadequate food stamp allotments, government refusal to provide free day care, and numerous other disadvantages well known to the left, are sufficient to compel thousands of poor women every year into sacrificing babies they want to bear.

Persons involved in the abortion debate—on either side, for that matter—do us a great disservice by attempting to divorce the reality of abortion from those factors (especially economic ones) that motivate the decision.

It is not sufficient to say that the world is "cruelly overpopulated"; that argument serves only to legitimize the views of those who would actively promote abortions and sterilizations, both here and among Third World women, as a means of lowering birthrates.

Yes, Audrey, there is such a thing as medical abuse of women—and abortion is no exception.

-Elizabeth Moore
Palmer Park, Md.

CORRECTION:

Last week's story by Clayton Riley on the Olympics, "It's a long, cold war on the playing fields," should have been noted as copyrighted by Pacific News Service.

CALENDAR

February 20

"Controlling Interest: The World of the Multi-National Corporation," a film by California Newsreel. Plus a discussion of the power of the multi-nationals by *IN THESE TIMES* editor James Weinstein. 8:00 p.m., Koon Forum, Leverone Hall, 2001 Sheridan Rd. (Corner of Sheridan & Foster), Evanston, IL. A fundraising benefit for *IN THESE TIMES* co-sponsored by the Progressive Student Coalition of Northwestern University. \$1.00 donation at the door.

February 28-March 2

The 11th National Conference on Women and the Law, hosted by the women law students of the Golden Gate University, will be held in the San Francisco Civic Auditorium. Call 442-7258 for details.

March 1

Making the Future Work: Lessons from Labor's Past with Fred Thompson, former IWW Northwest Labor Organizer, Spokane Teamsters for a Democratic Union, Seafirst Organizers. Concert by "Utah" Phillips. Sessions at "The Lodge," Spokane Falls Community College. Details from Ryegrass (509) 747-1925.

Symposium: We Shall Not Be Moved: the historical roots of agrarian protest; Ames, Iowa. Speakers include Fred Stover, H.L. Mitchell, Al Krebs, Helen and Scott Nearing, Donald Grubbs. Information: Agrarian Protest, 2828 Oakland, Ames, Iowa 50050.

March 7

"The Political Economy of Poetry," a talk by Ron Silliman at the San Francisco Socialist School, 29 29th Street (off Mission), 8 p.m., \$2 or donation. Childcare available.

March 22

No Registration, No Draft, No Cold War. National march and rally against the draft in Washington, D.C. For more information on how to help organize in your area, or to send needed contributions, contact: Mobilization Against the Draft (MAD), 853 Broadway, Room 851, New York, NY 10003. (212) 260-3270.

DAVID OST

Soviet press blames U.S. for detente failure

"SUPPORT OF THE STRUGGLES OF PEOPLE FOR NATIONAL liberation and social progress: this is the principle of our foreign policy. So it has been, so it is, and so it will be!" [This declaration, from the news weekly on international affairs *Za rubezhom* (Abroad), exemplifies the message the Soviet press has been stressing in its coverage on Afghanistan. Most of the explicit commentary on the events has come not in the numerous accounts wired from Kabul, but in those wired from Washington. One unmistakably gets the impression from their press that the Soviets are receiving opposition not from the hills of Afghanistan but only from Capitol Hill in D.C.]

Pravda and the other dailies have run extensive coverage on the "revolutionary developments" in Afghanistan, emphasizing the end of the tyrannical Amin regime and the re-consolidation of the progressive program of the PDPA (Popular Democratic Party of Afghanistan). There is virtually no discussion of Soviet military activities, although they have not hidden the fact that a "limited military contingent" is indeed operating inside the country.

However—and in this sense it is similar to the U.S. press coverage—by far the bulk of the discussion on Afghanistan has been concerned not with internal developments but with the international dimensions and ramifications of the crisis. They have stressed the excessive involvement in Afghanistan by foreign and "imperialist" interests, although the precise character of this interference has not been made clear. (For a very good account of recent U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, see the highly informative article in the last issue of *Counterspy*. Two of the "rebel leaders" are in fact U.S. citizens who last year

came to Washington for secret top-level discussions.)

In its lead story *Za rubezhom* writes: "The measures taken [by the Soviet Union] for the defense of the independence and sovereignty of the DRA [Democratic Republic of Afghanistan] are nothing other than the response to the actions of imperialist circles and their allies," the latter a reference to China and Pakistan. China has been attacked by name many times for its role in collaborating with the U.S. Pakistan, which is by far the chief immediate source of support and supplies for the Afghan opposition, has not received the same harsh treatment in the press as has the U.S. and China.

The Soviets, as well as their East European allies, have also been at great pains to demonstrate the new Afghan government's support for the rights of Moslems. The current leader, Babrak Karmal, does indeed have a long history of advocating a moderate program in relation to Islam, whereas the previous (but not original) leader Amin was known for his harsh suppression of religious freedoms.

Significantly, the first decrees of the Karmal government began: "In the name of Allah the merciful and compas-

sionate..." The Soviet press has been continually citing such gestures, and the Polish weekly *Polityka* specifically noted that Amin has been denounced as a "traitor to the people and enemy of Allah." *Polityka* also spoke unfavorably of Amin's "counterrevolutionary thesis" on the necessity of a decisive break with Islam.

The Soviets have depicted Carter's renewed Cold War offensive as part of an overall "anti-Soviet and anti-Afghan campaign." The sudden rejection of SALT II, ("on which Carter's signature already stands"), and the rapid build-up of military forces are seen as the most alarming developments, which threaten "not just Soviet-American relations but the whole international atmosphere." The embargo on grain sales, which was presented in the American press as the main item of Carter's initial package, has been downplayed. There has certainly been no official indication that it will create any problems. In a long interview with *Pravda*, Brezhnev forcefully declared that "not one" citizen would have any difficulties in procuring bread and other grain products. Significantly, however, he omitted any discussion on meat availability. It is here that the Soviets are likely to have problems. The Soviets have long been stressing the need to avoid waste of grain, and these admonitions can be expected to increase.

Overall, Carter's "get-tough" policy has been presented as a futile attempt to block the Soviet Union's comradely assistance to the progressive struggles of oppressed peoples. The crucial point they make is that it's a futile attempt: "One must have completely lost touch with reality to think that such 'sanctions' can put pressure on our country!"

Perhaps the most important question is how much all of this will be believed. The Soviet people usually know how to read their newspapers better than the best Kremlinologists. Very often they don't trust the press at all, but there is good reason to believe that the people will be largely united on this issue behind the government.

Some members of Congress, arguing for an American Olympic boycott, recently said (in an unbelievable racist slur that would not be tolerated if it weren't directed at Russians, or Iranians) that

Russians want only two things out of life: vodka and sports. So they said they would demand an explanation from their government when the U.S. withdraws its team. What he doesn't understand is that in the USSR the Olympics may be big, but SALT is bigger. What the Soviet people value above all is security. And what they are really afraid of is their southern border, and especially China. They will call to task not their own government, which has appeared as the most forceful campaigner for SALT II and mutual arms reduction, but rather the U.S. government, which cancels SALT, claims the area south of the Soviet Union as its vital national interest, and supplies technology and even military hardware to China.

Soviet people know their geography. An Afghanistan aligned with China and the U.S. is a prospect that would arouse their deepest fears. A visitor to the Soviet Union is often surprised at how people who regularly oppose the regime on basic issues will suddenly drop all protests and line up behind the government in relation to China.

So the people may not necessarily buy all the words about Afghanistan, but there will most likely be few misgivings over the Soviet presence there, unlike the very real pangs of conscience over Czechoslovakia 12 years ago. It is significant that the Soviet leaders were willing to send to Afghanistan troops of the same ethnic stock as the Afghans. To Czechoslovakia they conspicuously sent as few Slavic troops as possible.

The Soviet people will direct their anger not at their own government, but at the U.S. that can so calmly scrap detente, at a U.S. that can so haughtily disregard Soviet "national interests," at a U.S. that can boast of using food as a political weapon and can so quickly and so seriously begin war preparations.

The irony is that, domestically, this may turn out to be the most fortuitous set of developments for the Soviet leadership in years. The people may very well become more patriotic, more united behind its leaders, than it has been at any time since the end of World War II. ■

David Ost is a specialist in Soviet and Polish affairs at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

ABSCAM

Continued from page 5.

The first reform is that we should have for congressional campaigns what we have for presidential campaigns—public funding rather than corporate funding. This would cost us pennies apiece as taxpayers and save us hundreds of dollars apiece on non-special interest lawmaking.

The costs of congressional campaigns jumped 40 percent in the last election cycle. It used to be that \$300,000 campaigns were extremely rare, but they are increasingly common.

Radio and television time are very expensive even though, according to the Federal Communications Act, the public "owns the airwaves." We've never provided free or at-cost air time to candidates campaigning for office. What better use is there of the public airwaves than to educate the public?

Second, the ethics committees have to

establish standards for dealing with members of Congress who are accused of illegal conduct.

I would recommend that any member convicted of a felony that could send him to jail for two years or more should refrain from voting until all appeals are exhausted. It's not enough that his district elected him, because they probably elected him without knowledge that he was guilty of a crime, and because his votes affect 434 other districts, not just his own. Then, if a member is convicted and his appeals are exhausted, he should be expelled.

If a member of Congress is reprimanded or censured, the punishment should be more than a one-day admonition and a bad headline. At the least, such a member should not be permitted to chair a committee.

Third, there should be legislation that requires full-time lobbyists for substantial interests to disclose their issues and expenditures. The purpose is not to deter activities protected by the First Amendment, but to let the public and the media

understand who's trying to tilt Congress in their favor. Like fungus, corruption withers in sunlight.

Finally, all candidates for public office should disclose their tax returns. Some may claim this relegates them to second-class citizens. They, of course, always have the option of retaining their "first class" citizenship by not running for public office.

As you mentioned, more of the Abcam targets are Democrats than Republicans—for the practical reason that committee chairs are Democrats. Is there a reason why two of those members—Senator Williams and Representative Thompson—mentioned in stories about the influence buying are strong labor champions in Congress?

No one knows why the FBI chose its

suspects. I know the labor community is pretty suspicious about why Mr. Labor in the Senate and Mr. Labor in the House were singled out.

Could any corporate influence, say through the Chamber of Commerce, on the FBI had anything to do with who was chosen as a suspect?

I don't think much of the Chamber of Commerce or the FBI. But I really doubt that happened.

Are you optimistic about reducing the role of money in politics?

Public Citizen also did a survey of how often the candidate in an election who spent the most money won, and the answer was 85 percent in 1978. So it's not inevitable that if you spend the most money, you win, but it sure is an asset to have outspent your opponent. ■

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edited by Patricia Peyton

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IN DEPTH

Working Americans pay for the dollar's rescue

By James Livingston & Lawrence Lynn

FROM THE TURN OF THE CENTURY UNTIL 1970-71, AMERICAN corporate leaders saw a liberal world trade and investment system—an "open door" world—as the means to enlarging markets and investment outlets, increasing employment, and raising living standards. Overseas expansion of the American business system was sought both to pacify class conflict at home and to underwrite peace among the capitalist industrial nations abroad. But an "open door" multinational capitalist system was not fully achieved until after

World War II, and then only after an armed crusade against Communism and nationalist revolutions around the globe. That system lasted until 1971, when Richard Nixon announced the formal demise of the Bretton Woods international monetary agreement.

In the 1970s, American corporate leaders began to seek the reconstruction of a stable "open door" world economy as a primary goal to which domestic employment levels and living standards could be sacrificed. The enthusiasm with which corporate executives have greeted the Federal Reserve Board's restrictive monetary policies—a rationing of credit to induce slower growth and higher unemployment—reflects their new commitment to world economic stability as an end in itself.

The landmark shift in American monetary policy inaugurated by the Fed last October is aimed at stabilizing the international value of the dollar and preventing the collapse of the multinational capitalist economy by means of drawn-out "deflation" at home. General welfare at home is to be sacrificed to the corporate empire abroad.

Business opposition to expansionist fiscal policy, or Keynesian "demand management," is now so extensive that the Fed, corporate executives, most economists and many politicians discuss a tight-money induced recession as if it were needed to restore our moral fiber. Indeed, corporate leaders look to the "external discipline" imposed by the need to stabilize the dollar abroad as almost divine sanction for the punishment we are to receive. But they are not simply lying to us, nor seeking merely to increase their short-term profits. They are seeking to preserve their system of multinational corporate capitalism. As

corporate leaders here see it, two alternatives face them and the nation:

First, an expansionist fiscal policy—government deficit spending to promote private investment, create markets for unused capacity and provide social services. This would risk more inflation at home and continued devaluation of the dollar abroad. Continued devaluation will mean increasing "diversification" away from the dollar by foreign investors and multinational corporations. It will mean increasing conversion of assets into Deutschmarks or other stronger currencies, and increasing prices for gold, silver, and oil as more investors seek to protect their wealth from dollar devaluation. Sooner or later this will cause wholesale defections from the dollar and the establishment of competing international currency blocs. That, in turn, could lead to fierce conflict—perhaps localized conventional warfare—among capitalist industrial nations, such as occurred from 1910 to 1945. Paul Volcker, chairman of the Fed, remarked in 1978 that "a process of disintegration within the industrial world could probably go a long way without intolerable damage to our economic welfare. But it is hard to visualize that process without it also leading to intense national competition for the markets and materials of developing nations."

Second, a "bone-crunching" monetary policy at home to foster deflation and recession. Restricting the growth of the money supply will notify foreign investors, monetary authorities, and multinationals that the supply of dollars will not in future exceed demand for them—in short, that the value of the dollar will be stabilized. Rationing credit at home will result in higher unemployment (say, 10 percent), liquidation of "marginal"

firms and, eventually, enough reduction in inflation rates and labor costs to encourage higher rates of investment. This will mean a reasonably stable price level in the U.S. and therefore will allow a return to more or less fixed international exchange rates. Fixed exchange rates will, in turn, provide a supra-national, "objective" source of money discipline that should in future prevent resort to Keynesian "demand management" by domestic policy-makers.

II

How would recession at home stabilize the dollar? The corporate argument goes like this: Lowering the growth rate of money supply severely restricts the availability of credit and reduces expenditures by consumers and investors. Inventories accumulate, output is cut back, unemployment rises—and consumer expenditures are further reduced. Eventually, to move unsold goods, firms mark up prices at a slower rate. Hence new wage bargains reflect a "lower inflation premium." As unit labor costs decline along with labor's real earnings, productive investment once again becomes profitable.

As investment in capital goods industries picks up, the corporate argument continues, labor productivity increases and it becomes profitable to expand output further. As employment in the capital goods sector increases, expanded output of consumer goods is called forth, and investment in this sector is stimulated. As productive investment increases overall, the price level stabilizes, for more actual goods and services are available under the aegis of restricted growth in money supply: fewer dollars chase more goods and services. And as the price level stabilizes, so too does the value of the dollar. Moreover, higher productivity and lower unit costs make American goods more competitive in world markets. That raises foreign demand for the dollar, and reinforces the stability of its exchange value.

All this involves a shift in national income from labor to capital, and from the public to the private sector. And it means that investment will go increasingly into production for export and into the construction of manufacturing capacity abroad. A "liberal" world economy survives at the expense of American living standards. Politicians who must answer to an economically stricken electorate are obviously the weak links in the enactment of this scenario. But then, as pluralism theorist Charles Lindblom has concluded, political democracy and corporate capitalism have always been at odds.

In the present crisis, corporate power has given notice that it will do and say anything to maintain the Fed's resolve in the face of popular opposition to grossly deflationary policies. It is prepared, in short, to sell us on the advantages of what a commentator for *Business Week* sees as "a period of stagnation that could last for years." We need not worry too much about "stagnation" as such. But the new corporate strategy could inaugurate an era of rising investment and output on the one hand and higher unemployment and lower real wages on the other.

The argument that connects recession and stabilization of the dollar obscures two important tendencies in modern capitalism.

First, the decline of foreign demand for dollars is not a product of over-zealous "demand management" in the "soaring '60s." On the contrary, the decline of foreign demand for dollars is more likely the result of the relative decline of demand for American exports that resulted from the reconstruction of European productive capacity after 1947 and the rise of a multinational corporate system in the 1960s. Dollar markets in Europe for American exports were reduced once European capacity was rebuilt. But direct foreign investment by U.S.-based multinationals is equally culpable. It normally involves construction of manufacturing capacity in host countries, not the export of products manufactured in the U.S. to those countries. Export of manufactured goods from the U.S. requires the establishment and maintenance of dollar markets; for-

eign direct investment by multinationals does not. A long-term solution to the problem of the dollar's value would therefore have to address the multinationals' ability to transfer manufacturing capacity from the U.S. to host countries.

Second, greater net investment in capital equipment is no longer needed to increase the output of goods. Since 1920, expanded output of capital goods has been possible through the modernization of capital stock, or the simple replacement of depreciated plant and equipment. It has not required net investment in plant and equipment or net additions to the labor force in manufacturing and agriculture. In fact, the central dilemma of modern capitalism is that expanded output of goods proceeds as a function of declining net investment and declining employment in manufacturing and agriculture. Under these conditions, it follows that business recovery from recession rests on a reduction of employment and real wages, and that growth in employment and real wages requires public sector investment. The disrepute into which Keynesian "demand management" has fallen indicates a historic shift in corporate strategy, towards an acceptance of high domestic unemployment and lower living standards for labor as the necessary price of world stability.

III

Before we bow to the corporate high priests' eagerness to sacrifice our standards of living on the altar of a stable world economy, we should subject their dogma to public scrutiny and debate. Perhaps the way to do that is to suggest a third alternative, one that would stabilize the dollar and also promote the general welfare.

To be realistic, such an alternative would have to build on the programmatic and ideological initiatives of the labor movement. It would have to include, for example, price controls that are legislatively mandated and executed. This would stabilize the value of the dollar without allowing hiring experts from executive branch agencies to impose *de facto* wage controls on labor.

A realistic socialist alternative to corporate strategy would also have to include the incremental creation of a public investment system, because private corporate investment will not produce more jobs and higher living standards. Both Lane Kirkland, the new leader of the AFL-CIO, and William Winpisinger, the avowed socialist who heads the International Association of Machinists, have already suggested as much. The object of such a system would be to enforce, by legislative mandate, the investment of public and corporate funds on behalf of the people's needs. Industries that meet social needs—housing, energy, health care, education, mass transportation—would be the central concerns of a public investment system.

To promote the general welfare—to serve the purpose of equity and efficiency, and guarantee Americans the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—a public investment system would have to be democratic. It would have to be based on investment planning by local communities and state governments, and would have to make use of Congress in the coordination of local and state planning. Labor unions and local communities throughout the Northeast have already recognized the need for public supervision of corporate investment, and are supporting proposed legislation in Congress that would circumscribe the options of companies that do not operate in the interests of regional welfare. A democratic, decentralized public investment system is not a visionary or utopian scheme. It is an immediately practical socialist alternative to the conscious corporate assault on American living standards. And it is the only truly pragmatic alternative to more inflation, dollar devaluation, competing currency blocs and the threat of war.

James Livingston and Lawrence Lynn are history graduate students at Northern Illinois University.

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ART & ENTERTAINMENT

ROLLIN' AND TUMBLIN'

Who plays the Blues today

By Jay Walljasper

Blues musicians are often thought of as some kind of endangered species.

It's true that most of today's acknowledged blues makers—Muddy Waters, B.B. King, John Lee Hooker, Willie Dixon, Albert King, and Lightnin' Hopkins—have reached or are pushing hard on the age of 60. But just as these musicians, with their electrified urban sounds, replaced the old acoustic Southern bluesmen in the '50s, so a new generation of younger players is ready to take their places.

The blues musicians currently tearing things up on the Midwestern bar circuit—Albert Collins, Luther Allison, Koko Taylor, Lonnie Brooks, Jimmy Johnson, Fenton Robinson, and Son Seals—range in age from 38 to 50, but their fresh, soulful playing amounts to a new wave in the blues.



None of them are overnight sensations. They've all served at least 20 bruising years of apprenticeship in roadhouses and barrooms from the Delta to Duluth. Koko Taylor and Albert Collins even had million-selling singles in the early '60s. But it is only recently that any of them have gained enough national attention to be booked into prestigious clubs like New York's Bottom Line, Washington's Cellar Door and Toronto's El Mocambo.

The commercial success of white bands like the Blues Brothers and George Thorogood's Destroyers might have opened a few doors for them, but most of this new-found prominence is a pay-off for years of making the rounds on the blues circuit. The circuit begins with Midwestern college towns, then on to Colorado resorts, small clubs in Wisconsin, Illinois and Ohio, festivals on the East Coast, summer jaunts to Europe and finally back to the night spots in sweet home Chicago. It's a grueling life, and one most established musicians try to avoid.

"I've been living out of a suitcase for nine months," Albert Collins, the only one of this new crop of blues players that doesn't call Chicago home, said. "I've only been home to Los Angeles twice in the last year

and eight months. I'm gettin' tired. But these people came to see a show and I gotta give them my best."

Collins is perhaps the most successful of these "young" blues musicians. John Lee Hooker and Albert King both told *ITT* this summer that he was their favorite guitarist, and Collins' 1979 record, *Ice Pickin'*, was everyone's pick for blues album of the year.

Like their rock'n'roll counterparts, the new wave of blues musicians is dependent on album sales to build a following. Old bluesmen, like Hooker and King, never gave records much thought. Most of their income came from performances and they looked on recording sessions as a chance to make some money right on the spot. They rarely earned any royalties because the record firms never tried to push blues albums. And if one of the albums did manage to sell well, the companies usually didn't bother to send any money to the artists.

Younger blues musicians are getting a better break with the emergence of small specialized labels like Chicago's Alligator and Delmark, and Boston's Baron and Rounder, which look on blues records as more than just a chance to make a quick buck.

Son Seals, Koko Taylor, Lonnie Brooks, and Fenton Robinson also record with Alligator, while Jimmy Johnson's first album is expected soon on cross-town rival Delmark. Of this new generation of blues musicians, Luther Allison has had the hardest time finding a home at any label. He was on Motown Records for a bit, and his latest release is on a Peoria, Ill., label—Rumble Records—that was created just for the occasion.

The biggest advantage of a label like Alligator or Delmark is that, besides pushing the records, the company will arrange club, concert and festival dates. To sign with one of the two labels is to be assured attention around Chicago, still Mecca for blues enthusiasts. Also because they specialize in the blues, Alligator, Delmark and the others have a better track record in capturing the energy of the music on vinyl.

While things are looking up for blues musicians in some ways, they still face many of the same old problems. For instance, many popular white musicians still look on blues tunes as public property. Blue-eyed soul star Boz Scaggs got his big break with a tune called "Somebody Loan Me a Dime," which note for note resembles a Fenton Robinson song with the same title. Scaggs went on to fame,

while Robinson didn't even get credit for the composition.

Racism is still prevalent in the music business, too, and many club owners in predominantly white areas still balk at the idea of booking a black band. They fear a black band will attract too many black customers, so instead they book white bands to play the blues.

"If a black cat plays it, they don't get any attention," explained Jimmy Johnson. "But a white guy does it—he can get attention. First it was the Rolling Stones, and now the Blues Brothers. I don't resent them though. Man, I wish there was more of them. They get the white kids out to hear us. Black people don't come out anymore, so you play for whites."

Today's blues audiences are made up overwhelmingly of young whites. An established bluesman like B.B. King will still attract a number of middle-aged blacks, but younger musicians face audiences introduced to the music by Mick Jagger, Duane Allman or John Belushi.

Part of the success of the new generation of blues players is that they can bridge the gap between rock and blues. Albert Collins' and Luther Allison's slicing guitar lines are reminiscent of hard rock, while Koko Taylor's lusty, everything-goes vocals recall Janis Joplin. Son Seals, Lonnie Brooks and Jimmy Johnson all cut their blues with the familiar strains of soul music.

Just as the music has been updated, so have the lyrics. These younger blues artists rely heavily on original compositions, and while the emotional essence of the music never changes, topics like charge cards (Albert Collins' "Master Charge") and assembly lines (Luther Allison's "Cat Blues" about the Caterpillar tractor factory) are added.

While any thorough list of the new wave of blues musicians should include the names of Eddie Clearwater, Left Hand

Frank, Matt Murphy, Mojo Buford, Mighty Joe Young, Carey Bell, J.B. Hutton, and the Thunderbirds from Austin, Tex., the following seven are the real movers and shakers on the blues scene today.

Luther Allison—Allison is a dynamic guitarist whose straight-ahead power blues is a favorite with Midwestern fans, including Bob Dylan who stopped in at one of his Minneapolis shows. He seems to have conquered a drinking problem and now needs only to find a permanent record company to establish himself as a potent force in American popular music.

Lonnie Brooks—After a stint in Clifton Chenier's Louisiana Cajun band and a short career as a rock'n'roll singer, Brooks headed to Chicago to try his hand at the blues. You can still hear traces, however, of swamp-rock

discovered by blues fans on an anthology album released by Alligator records, *Living Chicago Blues*. His guitar work is subtle and polished, and an engaging tenor voice gives a dramatic quality to his performances.

Fenton Robinson—While most of the new wave of blues players stress sheer power in their music, Robinson is the calm master of understatement. His songs, although brimming with emotion, could pass for ballads and his voice is rich and controlled. Robinson is also noted in blues circles as an avid reader of philosophers like Herbert Marcuse, as well as the Koran.

Son Seals—Seals was literally born into the blues in the back of his father's blues joint in Osceola, Ark. He picked up the guitar at an early age, and at 38 is considered one of the finest players in the country. Seals' band features a high-powered brand of blues which complements his snarling vocal style.

Koko Taylor—Taylor is the heir to the grand tradition of female blues singers like Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey and Memphis Minnie. When she moved to Chicago from Memphis in the '50s, all the bigtime Southside musicians marvelled at her voice. She has sung with Muddy Waters', Willie Dixon's, and Buddy Guy's bands, and now leads her own, the Blues Machine.

Even with the emergence of a new generation of musicians, there is still talk of the blues dying because most of the young blacks prefer disco or funk music. But that judgment seems overly pessimistic.

As Son Seals told *Rolling Stone* writer Robert Palmer, "I went down to Little Mack's club here in Chicago the other night and he had a group of real young guys playing the hell out of the blues. I see guys younger than I am sitting in around town all the time. People haven't heard of them yet, but as long as they are coming up, the music has a chance of staying alive."



mixed in with his sizzling guitar and growling vocals. Brooks is also one of the most enthusiastic performers to be found in any style of music.

Albert Collins—They call him the "master of the Telecaster" guitar, and just a few minutes of his supercharged performances shows why. This is the man who replaced Jimmy Hendrix in Little Richard's back-up band, and his guitar work is just as unique and moving.

Jimmy Johnson—Years of backing up other Chicago bluesmen at night and driving a cab during the day finally paid off for Johnson last year when he was



Above, Albert Collins, Koko Taylor; below, Son Seals.

MOVIES

Winning through misunderstanding

By Pat Aufderheide

Being There is a technically clever comedy. It stars Peter Sellers in an excellent performance, and director Hal Ashby (who won comedy stars years ago with *Harold and Maude*) keeps the film moving crisply along. A simple notion with a sophisticated presentation, it is becoming a popular film. It makes a running statement on the penetration of video images into our daily lives, by constantly intercutting film images with snippets from ever-present TV. But its humor has a grim cast, rooted in despair.

Chance is an illiterate, simple-minded gardener who for the last 50 years lived inside a decaying mansion. When his master dies, he is thrust on to the street, and is quickly rescued from it by a rich matron who helps him home from a minor accident her chauffeur has caused. In the mansion he becomes friends with her rich, dying husband simply by offering comments on gardening (taken as an allusion to other things) and by echoing others' remarks. This technique, to simple Chance's faint surprise, works well, impressing doctors, lawyers, politicians and even the President of the U.S. We leave him in the care of the doting new widow. He is on the verge of becoming our next President.

The original story and screenplay were written by Jerzy Kosinski. His *The Painted Bird*, an autobiographical account of a Polish Jewish child encounter-



Chance (Peter Sellers) shows lawyers his gardening work, above; right, Chance at his favorite pastime, watching the tube.

In *Being There*, TV fantasies have become the reality.

ing the cruelties of WWII alone, first acquainted international readers with his coldly polished style and his cynicism about the possibility of good among us. This, like his other works, has a cold cleverness.

Besides the flash, *Being There*

has an important theme—the shaping of our attitudes and actions by the way we get information, and ways in which a small group can manipulate and control a large one in a democratic society that supposedly has an information glut. Kosinski finds

TV in this process to be a devastating influence. He tells us this in one long joke.

The key to Chance's success is the way everyone takes his remarks metaphorically. He talks about changing the seasons and the President takes this to mean

that recession is the winter that will lead to the spring of renewed growth. Metaphor here works destructively, to further isolate people and to block communication. Everyone sees Chance as they see themselves. It's a world in which there are almost no good-faith relationships. Chance's being misunderstood is in fact a symptom of a general loneliness.

The population of the film is divided into two camps—the corrupt and the stupid. Chance differs from everyone else in the film (except the matron) because he is sweet and harmless. This, depressingly enough, is the only innocence left to us, for Kosinski—one compounded of ignorance, stupidity, inability to make connections. Chance constantly changes the channels when he watches TV, even when he sees himself on the air. To him, his own video image is just another picture.

Because so few films address the domestic pervasiveness of TV with style as well as content, *Being There* can be interesting to watch. But it's depressing to watch a film whose dominant attitude toward its own characters is disgust. The film undercuts any critical potential that Kosinski's awareness has to offer. Viewers can see that the on-screen fools are stupid and vulgar. They know that they themselves are not. If you get the joke, you can't be the butt of it.

It's a snug, smug perch from which to view our political and social muddles. But I suspect we're all in the movie, as far as Jerzy Kosinski is concerned. ■



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BOOKS

Art and science of basketball

Second Wind: The Memoirs of an Opinionated Man
Bill Russell and Taylor Branch,
Random House, \$9.95

By Mark Naison

Entering professional basketball in the mid-'50s, Russell single-handedly changed the sport from a slow-moving game in which players moved in intricate patterns and rarely left their feet into a freewheeling aerial ballet in which deception and improvisation were the keys to success. A 6'9" center, Russell developed, through painstaking study of the game's angles and movements and rigorous control of his body, a shot-blocking capacity that made it virtually impossible for players with average jumping ability and a conventional array of shots to score on his team from close range.

As a result, Russell's teams dominated the league, winning 13 championships in 15 years. Other teams had to look for players who could play the game high in the air and throw a defensive center off balance with spins, double pumps and elaborate hand and eye feints. From the schoolyards of the inner city, players arose with the physical artistry to meet Russell's challenge—Elgin Baylor, Oscar Robinson, Earl Monroe, Connie

Hawkins.

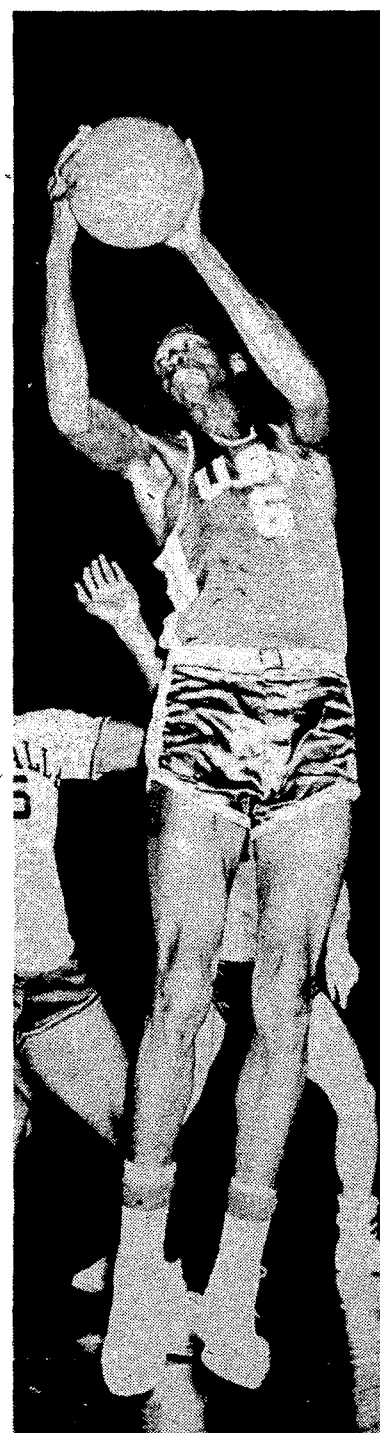
Bill Russell's autobiography, *Second Wind*, provides unusual insight into this process. With a sense of history rare among professional athletes, Russell sees how his own innovations were shaped by crumbling, but still powerful racial barriers. Blocked by poverty and prejudice from directing his formidable intellectual skills into academic pursuits, Russell stumbled on basketball as a vehicle that would affirm his sense of being special. He approached the game with a scientist's curiosity. His careful observation of the movements of other players, his cultivation of his own special perceptions (Russell discovered that he could "playback" other player's moves under his eyelids like an instant replay) and his inexhaustible enthusiasm for discussing basketball strategy demonstrate a personality of a force that far transcended the normal boundaries of athletic "celebrity."

Russell's sense of his own "specialness" pervades the book but it sits lightly on the reader because of his honesty and self-deprecating sense of humor. Russell's passages about his family life and relationships with women are detailed and perceptive. Russell, who was thrust into a world of limitless sexual opportunities, describes

how his shyness and mistrust of women made a shambles of his marriage and made it difficult for him to have the kind of relationships he craved. Russell only got over these problems after numerous awkward encounters, but he found, on entering middle age, that he had more female than male friends because he "found it much easier to get past the barrier of sex...than to hurdle the barrier of competitiveness with men."

Russell notes that blacks, when culturally dominant (as in the contemporary NBA) can be just as obtuse and insensitive to whites as whites are to them. Prejudice is inevitable, he argues, and gives texture and richness to human relationships, but people must struggle "to keep the prejudice from turning into bigotry and hatred." Russell places his own odyssey in the context of a family history spanning from farming in the post Reconstruction South to foundry work in an Oakland ghetto. He views contemporary racial politics as an adventure rather than a tragedy, a quest for self-definition and mutual discovery that challenges the intellect and emotions even as it tries one's patience.

Using sports as his jumping-off point, Russell produces a consistently interesting commentary on American life. ■



Mormons

"In some states the Church's top priority is to stop ERA. Our group made public this secret mobilization."

Continued from page 16.

mobilizing its members in all the unrattified states. Even in some ratified states, like California, wealthy Mormons are laboring diligently to reverse that state's ratification of the ERA.

"I realized then what my role had to be. In some states, the top priority of the Church is to stop ERA. We had to publicize this secret mobilization of the Church against the ERA and make it public—as only insiders could do. The Church itself forced us to evolve from a support group to a political group."

Faithful.

Chance again singled out Sonia Johnson. Because she was the only one in the small group who held only a part-time job and could afford to quit, she was elected president of Mormons for ERA. Her friends pooled their resources and sent Johnson on speaking tours into states where the Mormon Church was particularly active in its anti-ERA campaign.

But all the while, Johnson remained religiously faithful to the Church. Hers was a political opposition, not a religious one. She did not oppose the religious doctrines of her church—only its political doctrines. However, when Church president Spencer W. Kimball, who Mormons believe is a living prophet receiving revelations from God, speaks on a political subject, church and state are united as one.

In her talks, Johnson told women they should become a

lobbying force themselves and put pressure on the Mormon leadership through the 30,000 missionaries the Church has in the field. "Tell them," she said, "that you'll not listen to missionaries of a church that opposes your equal rights."

This became the basis of her expulsion from the Church. "My words were wrenched out of their political context," she says. "The Church claimed I said people shouldn't allow our missionaries into their homes, period. I wasn't able to convince my Church judges that my politics weren't irreligious. I was excommunicated on purely political grounds."

"It was devastating. It is tremendously saddening that the Church I've loved and served faithfully all my life is doing this to me. But someone had to say something and it happened to be me."

"The Church is anti-feminist in its male-oriented structure. It's painful to be a feminist in such an institution. But, it's also painful not to be part of that institution. The pain is everywhere, there is no escape. "I know I don't speak for the majority of Mormon women. I speak only for myself. But, I know how they feel and what they believe—I was once among them. But they haven't the faintest ability to conceive of what I believe and feel. There's simply no common ground on which to reach them, so I have never tried to proselytize among them."

"I don't talk about the ERA



with them, because that is not the issue. The issue is the political authority of the Prophet Spencer W. Kimball. If he received a revelation and changed his position on the ERA tomorrow, four million Mormons would do likewise."

Divorce.

Shortly after the Church excommunicated her, her husband filed for divorce.

"My husband is a feminist.

He and the children have stuck with me through it all and were always there to provide emotional and moral support. But it's hard on the family."

"Our lives have been so shattered by these last two years. I think there just comes a time when the pressure, tension and pain become too unbearable and you want peace—you just want out. No one knows these things will happen to us when we start out, do we? But, if I

had known, could I have done any different?"

Despite her excommunication, Sonia Johnson continues to attend services in the church she loves. Her bishop—the very bishop who made the decision to excommunicate her—told the congregation to show her love, despite her erring ways.

"The Church is big on love. But I told him, 'Love, schmu, I want justice!'"

"I am what they made me. Now I've become obsessive. Only one thing matters for me—equality. Isn't that what the Church taught me to believe in? Isn't that what it's supposed to stand for?"

"The next two and a half years of my life, until the 1982 deadline on the ratification of the ERA, will be devoted to this fight."

Eric Davin is an ex-Mormon from Arizona.

CULTURE SHOCK

BUSINESS IS BUSINESS

Chinese and Turkish vodkas have been advertising their products in competition with Russian vodkas, suggesting that drinkers boycott the Russian product as a result of the invasion of Afghanistan.

BAD TIMES

The ultimate self-help book is being produced by Prentice-Hall, reports Zodiac. Called *Survival: A Manual on Manipulation*, it promises to teach you to "totally dominate and control the lives of others." It warns that if you still believe in honesty and



hard work "you're just not going to make it."

BAD SIGNS

Brown stationery and pens have been selling well. The *Wall Street Journal* says color psychologists have found

that brown is associated with pessimism and melancholy, and that the sales reflect inflation and recession's effects.

SHOPPING 1980

Today's supermar-

ket carts are 30 per cent deeper than five years ago, reports Zodiac, because researchers discovered many people quit shopping when their carts are full.

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Sonia & the Elders

By Eric Leif Davin

SONIA JOHNSON'S MARRIAGE of 22 years is in a shambles, her children are shunned by their friends, her social circle has ostracized her and the church that she, her parents, and her grandparents were raised in, has expelled her.

"It's all an accident," she says. "It happened because everybody else was at the beach or working."

Sonia Johnson is president of Mormons for ERA and on December 5, 1979, a three man Bishop's Court of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) excommunicated her on the grounds of "apostasy."

Her crime? She supported the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in opposition to her friends, her church leadership, and, most importantly, in opposition to the Mormon Church's president, the Prophet Spencer W. Kimball, who speaks with the voice of God from Salt Lake City.

Sonia Johnson was born in Iowa and raised in Utah as a fifth generation Mormon. She is slight of build and the mother of four children. She was educated at Rutgers and has taught Freshman English at four universities.

Until two years ago, the "women's movement" meant nothing to her. She was happy, she was content. However, her husband's work took them out of the country for years at a time: to Africa, Malaysia, Korea. And each time she returned home she went through culture shock at the changing perceptions of women.

Then in April, 1978, a Mormon official came to her congregation to explain why the Church opposed the "Equal Rights Amendment." He didn't use the initials, "ERA." He said it straight out, and Johnson wondered why anyone would oppose equal rights.

"I was sure the Church had good reasons," she said, "and I anticipated being told exactly why equal rights were to be opposed." The official, however, read the proposed amendment to the women.

Epiphany.

"It was love at first hearing," she says. "It seemed in harmony with every religious principle I had ever been taught."

And Sonia Johnson, who had not a single feminist friend and who had never read a single feminist book, experienced a revelation, an "epiphany," a peak experience of insight.

"When the church official told us Mormon men had always 'exalted' us, I knew he meant the opposite. When he said Mormon men loved us, it just sounded patronizing. The feelings of betrayal by everything I held most sacred were overwhelming."

For the next six months, she read and cried through every feminist work she could find, from *The Feminine Mystique* and *The Female Eunuch* to *Sisterhood Is Powerful* and *Against Our Will*. And

she became a "non-permission asking Mormon," something not acceptable in Mormon culture.

She and three like-minded new friends started "Mormons for ERA" as a support group for each other, as shelter from the storm.

In August of that year the four marched under their banner in the Washington, D.C. parade demanding an extension of time for the ratification of the ERA. "It really shocked people. It was like seeing a banner saying, 'Astronauts for a Flat Earth.' People couldn't believe there were women such as we."

But people remembered and when Indiana Senator

Sonia Johnson thought the ERA made good sense. That was just the beginning of her differences with the Mormon hierarchy.



Scott Hewitt

Birch Bayh planned a religious panel to testify in favor of the ERA before a special Senate Sub-Committee, he contacted Mormons for ERA.

It was August, and the other three members were vacationing at the beach and were unavailable. Only Sonia Johnson was in town and Senator Bayh asked her to testify.

It was another crisis for Johnson. Certain things in the Mormon Church are tabu and speaking out publicly against a Church position is one of them. She was panicked by the request, terrified. "I couldn't eat, I couldn't sleep, I couldn't pray."

Pioneers.

A vision came to her in her terror. As she knelt to pray for guidance, she saw surrounding her a circle of women in antique dress, the dress of the Mormon women pioneers who made the great trek westward to settle Utah. "I was no longer afraid, but calm and at peace. I was no longer alone."

Sonia Johnson went to old magazines in dusty archives and resurrected the words of Mormon women who supported the equal rights amendment of their day—suffrage. Her entire testimony before the Senate was composed of the writings of those pioneer Mormons.

ON THE SENATE SUB-COMMITTEE, however, was Utah Senator Oren Hatch, a high Mormon leader. "He put on the voice men use to talk to women in the Church," says Johnson, "and I had another frightening insight into a woman's true place in the Church." Senator Hatch exploded at Johnson, roared, yelled, accused her of arrogance and mistaken beliefs.

The news reporters had a field day reporting on the "family fight" in the Senate chambers. Calls started coming in from Mormon women across the country and the organization grew tremendously. "However," says Johnson, "while we have a mailing list of around 1,000 now, we will never be large because women fear being on the Church's hit list."

Then, in November, the Church-organized anti-ERA campaign hit Virginia, which has yet to ratify the ERA. Organizers and money poured in from Salt Lake City.

At an early organizing session, the Virginia Regional Representative (equivalent to an archbishop) told the assembled Mormon women: "Don't tell the public that men organized you. It'll make people think we're trying to keep you subservient." But the women got the message. If they were good members of the Church, they would do what God wanted them to do and organize to kill the Equal Rights Amendment in Virginia.

"I was appalled at this religious blackmail," says Johnson. "I was angered at the secrecy and underhandedness of the entire campaign. But, Virginia is only the tip of the iceberg. The Mormon Church is

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